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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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CHINA COMES TO INDIA

THE visit of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek to Delhi has touched the imagination of Indians. If India's rulers possessed this faculty, they also might well be touched. Separated through the centuries by the fastnesses of Thibet and Himalayan snows, the two great peoples of Asia are discovering one another. When the Field-Marshal meets Mr. Gandhi in his monastic cell, eight hundred million souls will be represented within it, one-third of mankind. China's record of stubborn resistance to Japanese imperialism should help to deter Indians from following Subhas Chandra Bose into the enemy camp. But the rest of the parallel may not work out as Downing Street might wish. Half-armed and isolated, the Chinese people have fought bravely through four years to keep a freedom they won by revolution. They could do this because they had at their head as president of their republic and commander of their armies a leader of their own. What Britain asks of India is to fight, not for herself, but for the British Empire, under a Scottish nobleman. History may judge that Congress is ill-advised in standing aloof. If it were to throw itself into the military and industrial work of defence, India might emerge from the war strong enough to extort her freedom. That, however, is for Indians to decide. Our business is to make Mr. Churchill understand that his reckless Diehard negations reflect the obsolete views only of a small minority. India's defences have been based on the assumption, dating from the mid-Victorian era, that danger threatened from the North. The guns are trained in the wrong direction. On the contrary, it is the Russians and Chinese who are defending the roads to India. The menace comes from the Power which our capitalists supplied, through four years, with all the raw materials of victory. If the Labour Party were worthy of its responsibilities it would follow Sir Stafford Cripps by insisting that we must give India a national government to-day and the choice of independence immediately after the war.

The news, meanwhile, from Singapore and Burma is as gloomy as it well could be. Thanks to superior artillery and the command of the air, the Japanese crossed the narrow waters by night with ease and established themselves on the north-western shores of Singapore island. They managed with equal ease to repair the causeway our engineers had blown up, and to use it unopposed. It is unlikely that the city can hold out for very long. Even graver is the news that they have crossed the Salween river and taken Martaban, which brings them uncomfortably near to Rangoon, the sea-port which serves the Burma road. Is it realised that if we lose the chance of supplying the great Chinese armies with modern arms, our best chance of any counter-offensive against the Japanese is gone? The best place at which to defend the Dutch islands and Australia may be the Yangtse Valley. Instead of attempting the local defence of our scattered possessions, the best use we could make of a few air-squadrons and tank formations might well be to send them to back a Chinese attack—perhaps on Indo-China or Thailand, possibly on Canton or the Yangtse cities. But by an omission hard to understand, our Chinese ally has no representative on the Pacific War Council that sits in London. The Indian nation is "represented" by Mr. L. S. Amery. When and how did it appoint him? An empire so devoid of imagination and generosity will survive, if it does survive, by luck rather than leadership.

The Russian Front

The Russians are still advancing at several points of their long front, but as they disclose few place-names, it is impossible to follow their operations in detail. Our impression is that German resistance is stiffening, for the bigger centres such as Rzev and Kharkov hold out stubbornly. Leningrad seems to be still invested, though food may have reached it over the frozen Lake Ladoga, but the Russians are now able to drive wedges into the "lines" of the besiegers. For this purpose they have even used cavalry and struck the enemy in the rear. "Lines" is, however, a misleading word. There are no continuous trench lines as in the last war. At the most there is a deep belt of scattered positions—towns and villages lightly fortified, some blockhouses, with minefields here and there to trap tanks. Time is passing and Marshal Timoshenko has barely two months in which to drive the Germans out of the Ukraine and across the Dnieper. At present even the Sea of Azov is frozen, but spring comes early in the South. The Germans, doubtless, are making everything ready for an early march once more towards Rostov and the Caucasian oil-fields. It would seem to be vital that the Russians should recover the Crimea. The Dnieper also, when swollen by the melted snows, should be a formidable obstacle. But the Russians have still much ground to cover before they reach its left bank. Meanwhile the Turks, usually well-informed in such matters, describe the efforts of the Germans to recruit fresh legions of satellites in the Balkans. In the hope of becoming the pampered slave, Rumania will give 16 divisions. That settled, a less willing handmaid, Hungary, must give as many or more. It is said that Italy, and even Bulgaria, will also be laid under contribution. From all these quarters an additional non-German force of 1,500,000 men or more is gathering to join in the spring offensive against Russia. What part are we ready to play in defeating it?

Greek Foodship

The 8,000 tons of food which Britain has promised to Greece is still held up. There is said to be no ship available. But the Greeks are dying of starvation; we are informed that the starvation death rate in Athens has already

reached the ghastly figure of 500 to 1,000 per day. If there is any available ship in the Indian Ocean or the Red Sea it could be unloaded at Suez and sent laden with wheat straight to the Piraeus; not that one ship load will go far. 8,000 tons will feed part of Greece for a fortnight. Regular shipments of 20,000 to 30,000 tons a month are necessary and the ships must be supplied from the million tons of Greek shipping sailing the seas in our convoys. Food may soon be the most important single factor in this war.

Aiding Vichy

Mr. Dalton's answers to questions have confirmed the general belief that Rommel has been receiving supplies through Tunisia. These included petrol and aviation spirit, together with wheat, oil and wine. In what quantities Vichy gave this aid was not stated. The moral clearly is that London has been too complacent in tolerating the tactics of appeasement adopted by the State Department. When it protested against the action of the fishermen of St. Pierre and Miquelon in hoisting the flag of Free France with Admiral Muselier's aid, it dealt a blow to the only hopeful policy for the recovery of European freedom. Are we to infer that capitalist America still backs the Quisling governments against any popular revolt? In the same spirit it sent its supplies of oil and food to North Africa in order to maintain the rule of Vichy there. A plain demand should go from London to Washington, that this curious dualism in American policy shall cease.

Home Front *(by an Industrial Correspondent)*

The feeling about workers' income tax is undoubtedly strong and growing. This is no doubt partly a matter of the unfamiliarity of this form of taxation to the majority of wage-earners; but it would be a great mistake to dismiss the complaints as resting mainly on this ground. The real and substantial grievance is that the tax is quite unrelated to the amount of income at the time when it is collected; and this is a very serious matter for households whose budgets are made up on a weekly rather than an annual basis. At the moment the great trouble is that tax is being collected in winter on heavy summer overtime earnings, often with deplorable results on the size of the average packet. A Bootle firm, according to a description in the *Times*, found that many of its workers would have had their payments scaled down last week to the statutory minimum (£2 17s. 6d. for married and £1 17s. 6d. for single men) had not the firm advanced the money for paying the tax, which will thus be spread over a longer period. But clearly most firms will not do this, and it is not a satisfactory solution of the problem. The right solution must surely be to relate tax payments directly to normal weekly earnings above a minimum level, with or without subsequent adjustments of liability.

* * *

A second grievance is that husbands and wives are assessed together. This is, of course, a long-standing complaint; but point has been given to it by the campaign to bring married women into the war factories. From the standpoint of the household the wife's earnings are very naturally reckoned in terms of the total addition to the combined income after allowing for tax; and this means that what the woman can earn, as a net income, is often very small in relation to the efforts and sacrifices involved. It may be said that husbands and wives ought not to reckon in this way, and ought to regard the tax as spread evenly over their combined income. But who really expects them to think in this way? The right cure is to assess husbands' and wives' earned income separately, at any rate under war conditions; and we very much hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be prompt in doing this in order that the higher incentive to married women may begin to operate promptly.

* * *

The Industrial Health Research Board has just issued a White Paper dealing with "Hours of Work, Lost Time and Labour Wastage" (Stationery Office, 6d.). For the most part the Board's studies serve only to confirm what everyone knows already—that there is a close correlation between the amount of time lost and the length of the week that workers are called upon to work, that very long hours are unproductive, at any rate except over quite short periods; and that the need to travel long distances to and from work, or to travel under bad conditions, leads to loss of working time. In general the Board praises highly the assiduity with which the great majority of workers have stuck to their work even under very difficult conditions. It notes that, although the very rapid pace of work achieved for a short time after the fall of France was too hot to be kept up, the rate has remained higher ever since than it was before. In general the Board recommends that men's hours should not exceed 60 to 65 a week, or women's hours 55 to 60. It draws attention to the higher rate of loss of working time among women than among men, and also among married women than among single women, and details the obvious causes. Statistics are given for a number of selected factories; but the statistical basis of the report seems to be somewhat narrow, owing to the deficiency of records in the great majority of firms. The chief value of the document will be to reinforce the case for reducing the excessive hours which are still being called for in a considerable number of factories. Incidentally, it is interesting to observe that, despite the lure of double pay, absenteeism tends to be much higher on Sundays than on normal working days in factories which are open for seven days a week. It is also high on Saturdays, especially among women, and on both days the female rate is very much higher than the male. The Board promises further reports, and it is to be hoped that these will cover a considerably wider field.

* * *

It is typical that the House of Lords almost defeated the Government in a motion of Lord Gainsford to extend the working week of children under sixteen in potteries to 53 hours. Lord Wedgwood at once announced that his firm will not make use of this permission. This, again is typical; the Ministry disregarding all scientific evidence, issues a decree that decent people will not implement, and on which it does not insist. Only the worst firms will take advantage of its order.

The Witch Hunt

The Rothermere press seems to be again embarking on the line of propaganda which proved so disastrous at the end of the last war. A campaign of witch-hunting produces hysteria which makes impossible that constructive attitude without which wars will continue to succeed one another at intervals of twenty years or less. For the most part the people of this country are to be congratulated on keeping their heads in the strain of this war. For a short period, when the spectacle of Fifth Columnism in Holland, Belgium and France revealed a frightful danger in case of invasion, an unhappy but intelligible movement against all refugees swept official circles. The movement was reversed by common sense. No particular party can claim credit or blame in the matter; Conservatives and Labour and Liberal were alike responsible for the indiscriminate internment; all shared in the subsequent revulsion against an act that was universally admitted to have been impolitic in conception and stupid and onerous in administration. To-day, eighteen months later, without any of the same excuse in terms of an unexpected emergency, some newspapers have begun a campaign of whose source they may be only partly conscious, but of whose evil effects no thinking person can doubt.

Some months ago the *Sunday Times*, apparently converted by the arguments of Lord Vansittart, began a campaign against all Germans, whether they were disguised Nazis or, in fact, our good friends and allies. At one point this campaign reached a meanness on which we commented and which we are glad to see the *Sunday Times* itself found distasteful. The *Sunday Times* is a reputable and serious organ of opinion and we were not surprised when it ceased to give space to personal vilification against helpless individuals on the basis of very suspect information. Perhaps another consideration in the minds of the Editor and Proprietor of the *Sunday Times* was the effect that this campaign had on British propaganda to Germany. We notice, for instance, that on November 23rd the *Sunday Times* inserted a special announcement, saying:

> We have again to expose the impudent misrepresentations of the *Sunday Times* by the German radio. In its main news broadcast on Wednesday it said "this paper had demanded the extinguishing of the German people." This was sheer invention.

What, one asks, did the *Sunday Times* expect?

This campaign, in an even less responsible, and more malignant form, has now moved to the Rothermere press. We have seldom read a more unworthy bit of propaganda than that which featured as the main item on the front page of the *Sunday Dispatch* last week. Here were listed, in one indiscriminate anathema, persons like Dr. Otto Strasser, whom as a past National Socialist we find interesting as a witness but completely untrustworthy as a politician, and an unclassified group of German refugees in this country, many of whom are already doing excellent work towards the war effort and whose loyalty to the anti-Fascist cause is undoubted. We should like to ask the *Sunday Dispatch* what conclusions it wishes a mass of often ignorant readership to draw from this listing of organisations and persons. Does it wish to encourage the lynching spirit in this country? Has it made careful inquiries lest it unwittingly becomes the vehicle through which a very small group of propagandists, including some who may themselves be refugees or of German origin, hope to begin a campaign of denunciation?

NEW STATESMAN PAMPHLET

Production: A Plan for War Industry

OUT TO-DAY • SIXPENCE • 32 PAGES

LORD BEAVERBROOK, asked why the Government did not nationalise the arms industry, replied: "Put your argument forward in reasoned terms, and if it is strong enough, let it prevail." This pamphlet, written by a well-known industrial expert, takes up the Minister's challenge.

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ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

POSTAGE on this issue is: Inland, 1½d.; Foreign, 1d.; Canada, 1d.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE . . .

MR. CHURCHILL was apparently surprised when his statement on the powers of the new Minister of Production was greeted with silence in all parts of the House. When Mr. Austin Hopkinson referred to this chilly reception, Mr. Churchill, it is reported, waved his Order Paper towards Mr. Clement Davies, who is regarded as the father of the agitation for a Minister of Production. "You at least ought to cheer," the Prime Minister said. This incident suggested to many Members that the Prime Minister had quite misunderstood the situation after his return from America. He appears to have thought in terms of politics. As long as he satisfied the Conservative Central Office, which likes Sir Andrew Duncan as representative of big business in charge of Supply; as long as he yielded to the extent of calling someone Minister of Production, then he seems to have hoped that everyone would be satisfied. He has never understood that some of his critics were disinterested; that they are properly and terribly alarmed at the inadequacy of British tanks both in numbers and, apparently, on the Libyan evidence, in quality; that they feel it a disgrace that machines should be idle; that they should be worried in their consciences about the tendency in Britain to rely on Russian victories in default of any of our own. The House wanted not a political shuffle, a change of Minister not for the sake of change, but for the sake of production. It is now recognised that without a complete overhaul of Government machinery and personnel, there is little reason to expect better results.

There can be no real Minister of Production without a department of his own: there can be no real Minister of Production unless the "Controls", now under Supply and Aircraft Production, are transferred and reorganised from top to bottom; and there can be no real Minister of Production unless he has some control over labour as well as other factors, or unless he is able to alter the present constitutional relationships between the Government and the big, nation-wide firms, and thus institute a real *regional* system of organisation and management in the war industries. As far as we are able to judge from the Prime Minister's statement, not one of these essential things is to be done. In effect we are offered not a Ministry of Production, but a revival of an office analogous to Sir Thomas Inskip's defunct and proven-useless office of Minister for Co-ordination. Indeed, in some respects the change may be actually for the worse. Mr. Bevin, as Chairman of the Production Executive, has at any rate had some power to bring labour supply into direct relation to the other factors; but there is a danger that this power may be lost with Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Bevin exercising co-ordinate, but not co-ordinated, powers. As for Sir Andrew Duncan's return to the Ministry of Supply, we can hope little from that; he has held the same office before without doing anything to remove the fundamental vices of that curious bundle of "Controls" and departments operating under a common name. Nor is it reassuring that the Minister of Aircraft Production is left undisturbed in his office. In fact, the whole affair shows that the Prime Minister is still quite unwilling to meet, or else has entirely misunderstood, the feeling in the country, and has mistaken the demand for a far-reaching change in the organisation of the war industries for a mere desire to give Lord Beaverbrook a more honorific title. There will be no Ministry of Production until a much more drastic change is made in the whole set-up of the supply departments.

The Prime Minister, in fact, has failed to solve a problem which was not soluble on the assumptions he made. What was wanted was a complete reorganisation of production under a single supreme control which would include labour. Lord Beaverbrook distrusted by Labour and an equal colleague in the War Cabinet with Mr. Bevin, could not be given the necessary powers. Nor would it have been valuable to confer them upon him, because, whatever qualities Lord Beaverbrook possesses, the capacity for steady planning is not among them. One alternative would have been to give Lord Beaverbrook a different post altogether and to make Mr. Bevin Minister of Production with full powers. Because Conservatives and big business would have disliked this, Mr. Bevin could not be offered the position of Minister of Production with the powers necessary to make a success of it. Therefore we have Sir Andrew Duncan, at the head of Supply, Mr. Bevin left in charge of Labour, and Lord Beaverbrook as another co-ordinator with no machinery for bringing Labour and Supply into their proper relation, except, in the last resort, by the arbitrament of the War Cabinet.

Personal arrangements may provide temporary solutions for problems which are left unsolved in the formal phrases of a White Paper. All we can say is that no one now expects the new scheme to last very long. The blame, if it fails, should not be wholly imputed to Mr. Churchill. He takes the blame because he insists on bearing a burden of responsibility which no single man should shoulder alone. If his Labour colleagues had been more equal to their responsibilities the Cabinet might long ago have been on the way to solve the fundamental conflict lying behind these difficulties. They never faced the implications of the pledge to conscript property as well as persons in this war. Have they ever, one wonders, asked themselves whether it is not essential to consider, in our grave situation, the type of change suggested in the pamphlet, *Production : a Plan for War Industry*, which is this week published from this office? Sooner or later—and soon if we are to avoid further unnecessary disasters—we must have a Minister of Production with the vision and the powers to go far beyond anything now contemplated by the present Government.

THE SILENT REVOLUTION

[The following article is written by a serving officer who before the war was a Labour Party Candidate.]

OUR politicians seem curiously unaware of certain changes which have taken place in this country during the last two years. They talk, both in and out of Parliament, as if they still represented the bulk of their constituents, and as if these constituents nearly all belonged to the old political parties and would regroup themselves as soon as the war and the political "truce" should come to an end. There is a smug complacency about the Labour leaders which is especially depressing to those who took part in the early struggles of the movement, and are now, perforce, lookers-on. Let us consider some of these new factors.

(1) Men and women of all classes, who would normally have never discussed politics except amongst their friends, are now being mixed up together in billets and factories, or spending long vigils on fire-watching, etc. Boredom and a widespread sense of frustration encourage them to talk very freely at a time when political leadership, in the old sense of the word, is almost non-existent. Never before has there been so much general talk in England. On the whole, it is intensely critical of those in public life, and takes little account of their former political allegiances. After another year or two I doubt if many people will remember what were the original parties of Ministers like Sinclair, Butler, Greenwood and Ernest Brown, or of Opposition speakers like Winterton, Granville or Shinwell. The public no longer approach controversial subjects along the old party lines or even along "class" lines.

(2) A corporate sense is slowly growing amongst those who are taking part in the war directly and physically, especially those who are in some kind of uniform. The overwhelming majority of these men and women have never voted and have no real connection with any political party. The last General Election took place over six years ago. Most candidates would agree that comparatively few men and women under 24 actually voted, and, of course, none under 21. This means that in a year or so there will be hardly anyone under 30 who will even have that slight relation to a political party which comes from having once voted for it.

(3) The development of the war and its increasing toughness have made both of the old parties seem very foolish and old-fashioned. With China fighting for the Indian Empire, and the only Power capable of retaking Hong Kong, most of the old imperialist talk has become ridiculous. With Russia saving us in Europe, the chief Conservative vote-winning stunt becomes a comic memory. On the other hand, the Labour Party's long connection with pacifism and its advocacy of disarmament prevent it reaping any reward for its support, a rather hesitating support, of certain countries which are now our allies. In England, as a whole, there were a large number of men who were violently opposed to "appeasement" and who also saw that we were drifting into a war for which we were unprepared. Many of these joined or rejoined the Services after Munich, but they were and still are totally unrepresented in Parliament except by Mr. Churchill.

(4) Russian military successes and our own continual failures are having a most remarkable influence on the younger generation. The Army, much more than the other Services, is developing a hopeless sense of frustration. They do not feel themselves inferior in courage, physique or intelligence to the Germans, and believe themselves definitely superior to the Italians and Japanese. Yet they must look back either on garrison duties interspersed with not very realistic training, or else upon expeditions which were badly organised and usually ended disastrously. To some extent they blame the Brasshats. There is not, however, any marked cleavage between officers and men, and, on the whole, the latter tend to blame their present discontents upon the politicians and upon the general system under which we are organised. There is not, as far as I can see, much interest in Communism as a creed and still less in the British Communist Party, but everywhere there is a feeling that some groups of people—perhaps Big Business, or perhaps the politicians—are thwarting our natural development. A few more Russian victories and Far East defeats may force Westminster to understand that the most deep-seated feeling in England to-day is one of envy—envy of the Russians, who are being allowed to fight "all out." Too many of our politicians are at heart *embusqués*, and they cannot understand that the *embusqué* mentality is by no means general. One trouble is that their chief contacts in their constituencies are with the elderly stay-at-home, town councillor type of man and woman.

(5) A considerable number of soldiers work

either continuously or occasionally alongside civilians. War conditions accentuate differences, and all sorts of industrial problems are now being examined through a distorting lens. The soldier is on a minimum wage, and that a small one. He gains no overtime, but he has the advantage of a not very generous family endowment system. He has to watch what is often a conspiracy between workmen and contractors to defraud the Government and is genuinely shocked by the enormous wages drawn by young bachelors working for firms which want to inflate their costs. The soldiers' reactions to all this vary enormously. On the whole, I do not think that the Army will be too easy to organise industrially after the war. The men will probably force the unions to alter their ideas about family allowances. The same factors which are leading to a divorce between the Services and the politicians also operate in regard to trade union leaders. At one time I had to interview a large number of recruits, mostly from industrial areas, who wanted advice about family allowances and kindred matters. In several cases I felt that either their trade union or their M.P. should be able to help in some difficulty which lay outside the Army sphere. I hardly ever found a recruit who knew the name of his M.P., or of the leading men in his union, if he belonged to one.

If the war continues for another two years I believe that Labour as a political, rather than an industrial, movement will mean practically nothing to anyone under forty, and that its leaders—even Mr. Morrison and Mr. Bevin—will have become fused, in the popular mind, with something which will be known as the "Government" or "The Old Gang." There seems a great opening for a new political party. It must advocate a "classless" society and aim at evoking a patriotism of the kind which the U.S.S.R. has managed to inspire. On the other hand, the Englishman has no great desire to be *gleichgeschaltet*, and the party would have to be individualist in the sense that men and women should think and express themselves freely without pressure from the Government or from organisations. The Englishman might be urged to take his religion, but not his politics, from his priest, his working conditions but not his politics from the trade union official, his commodities but not his politics from business men. The pre-1914 Liberal Party at its best might have catered in some way for the new generation, but it is now even more discredited than the Labour Party. The greatest danger of all is that the fighting Services, at the end of a war which is likely to grow more and more destructive, will become so violently anti-politician that they will hand over power to any individual who has managed to gain their confidence.

A LONDON DIARY

"THIS is the first fireside voice we have had since Baldwin," said a friend of mine after listening to Stafford Cripps on Sunday night. "It comes right in and sits down near you." This is an asset we did not know that Sir Stafford possessed. Quiet, conversational yet authoritative, he made people feel the contrast of our comparative comfort and Russia's agony; he spread a sense of guilt that we were, individually, not doing more about the war. The *Daily Express* cartoonist hit the nail neatly on the head when it represented Sir Stafford as Disney's Jiminy Cricket. He has further added to his reputation by the extremely straight answers that he gave to journalists in Bristol at the week-end. One can scarcely see him a member of Churchill's War Cabinet while he maintains the view he expressed about India. For the time being I am sure that Sir Stafford's right place is on the Front Opposition Bench. Before setting his course he needs an opportunity to relearn England after an absence of eighteen months. Mr. Churchill, I am sure, would be glad of a critic with a mind as powerful as his own. The Premier needs a critical standard by which to measure his own arguments. I am reminded of the distress of Mr. Asquith when Mr. Balfour left the Opposition Benches for the House of Lords. No man can be at his best if he is without serious opposition.

* * *

Sir Stafford, as an M.P. put it to me, has said in the last few days just the things that the country is waiting for. Nothing new, of course, about the comparison between our semi-detachment and the Russian life and death struggle. Nothing new, but a new sense of urgency and the peculiar impact of the call from Cripps on his return from the battlefield. The other points are the country's boredom with the old political parties: Sir Stafford has some clear inkling of the facts recorded in the article called the "Silent Revolution" which is published this week in this journal. Maybe other politicians have this realisation, too; Sir Stafford, a man without party, can say what is common knowledge. (It must be added that though the political parties no longer evoke enthusiasm, their negative power to prevent other leadership is still great.) Thirdly, he sufficiently understands the public, and the soldiers in particular, to know that morale is not, as Mr. Churchill still seems to think, a question of another eloquent speech, but a function of actual social change and the assurance that soldier and workman are not going back to homes for heroes, selling matches on street corners.

* * *

Liberal, Labour and Conservative M.P.s with whom I have talked since the Vote of Confidence all agree in expecting a further political crisis before very long. One Conservative back bencher to whom I talked was acutely conscious of responsibility in voting for the Prime Minister. He told me that he and some of his colleagues would have abstained but for Mr. Churchill's concessions in his final speech. As it was, he gave his vote with much misgiving. "After all," he said, "we know that Mr. Churchill is the greatest national cheer-leader we have ever had, and we need him for the purposes of national morale; when it reaches the point, we jib at letting the enemy or the neutral public make the wrong deductions from what would look to the outside world like a split in British unity. But there is no getting over the fact that Mr. Churchill has been unsuccessful in strategy, as well as inadequate on matters of production and home affairs. He won the Battle of Britain by courage, character and oratory; but the campaign in Libya, and his speech promising the destruction of Rommel's forces, and his reference to Blenheim and Waterloo, have really shaken our confidence in Mr. Churchill as Minister of Defence. Why should it not be possible to have a proper Minister of Production and a Minister of Defence without losing the inspiration of the Premier?" Another well-known M.P. complained to me bitterly about the changes in the Cabinet and the multiplication of Under-Secretaries, which did nothing for the war, but merely added to the number of Government "place-men." Most people I have spoken to feel tricked by the promise of a Minister of Production which turns out to be old Supply writ large, and I find that Mr. Churchill is creating real opponents in some who know the Dominions and feel that there is no reality in his substitute for an Imperial War Cabinet. All these and other issues will arise again with the battle turning against us in the Middle and Far East. And yet few people in the House or country want to kill Mr. Churchill to make whom?—Sir John Anderson, Lord Beaverbrook, Mr. Eden?—king.

* * *

I heard an important industrialist say the other day that production was like the tooth paste in a tube. You should get it by steady pressure from the bottom; our system still attempts to tease or suck it out of the nozzle. To which I add that Lord Beaverbrook gets more out of the nozzle than most people for a short time, because instead of sucking it he uses a hairpin or a harpoon or a crowbar, or anything else that is handy. The after-effects are less satisfactory.

* * *

The Irish are a surprising people. An American friend of mine recently fell into conversation on the mail boat with a young Irishman who said, on being asked, that he "hated the English." My American friend suggested that they were at least preferable to Germans. The Irishman agreed. "Well, then," said the American, "you probably prefer a British victory?" "Yes," said the Irishman. "In that case it would be logical, would not it, to do something to help the British to win?" "Yes, I suppose so," came the reluctant answer. "Perhaps I should explain that I am myself a fighter pilot in the R.A.F. going home on leave."

The number of those in Eire who have voluntarily joined the British Forces is in fact extraordinarily high—almost as high, I believe, in proportion to population as the corresponding figures for Northern Ireland.

* * *

Recent uses of the word "Quisling" remind me of the definition of traitor in Shaw's *Saint Joan*. The English chaplain outrages the Bishop of Beauvais by calling him a traitor when he is not disposed to surrender Joan to the English without proof of her guilt. The Earl of Warwick soothes the feelings of the French bishop by saying:

> In your language traitor means betrayer: one who is perfidious, treacherous, unfaithful, disloyal. In our country it means simply one who is not wholly devoted to our English interests.

* * *

Personally I prefer Dorothy Sayers in her Wimsey mood, but I could never make out why anyone should be shocked at her missionary efforts in the Children's Hour. Some, I hear, complain that the B.B.C. is departing from its principle of impartiality; "the other side" should also be presented. But there is no truth, I am assured, in the rumour that the B.B.C. is now to broadcast a Life of Satan.

* * *

Some of the weaknesses in the new soap rationing scheme are attributed to the fact that the Government could not consult people about it in advance for fear of a leakage and a vast Black Market operation in soap. If true, it is the most powerful argument I have heard for a long time in favour of drastic action to grub up the Black Market by its roots—which thrust deeper than many people think into the rich, dungy soil of our financial life. However the soap rationing was devised, engineers, railwaymen, housewives and others are already pointing out immediately necessary adjustments. The requirements of mothers with very young children seem to have been entirely overlooked. Laundries, on the other hand, are to be allowed soap at the same rate as they have been using it in the past six months. This means an absurd favouring of those who can afford to pay the present enormous prices charged by the laundries. What about

the possibilities of reducing prices and providing communal facilities by publicly owned laundries corresponding to the deservedly popular British Restaurants?

* * *

I have just heard a pleasant story about Marshall Field, the Chicago millionaire who founded (before the Japanese attack had united America) the *Chicago Sun*, a new pro-Roosevelt paper to counteract the isolationism of the *Chicago Tribune*. Somebody warned Mr. Field that to start a new paper in Chicago would cost him a large size packet of money. He replied he didn't care if it did. What did it matter now what happened to his money? The way the world was going you could not tell what money would be worth anyway. Mr. Rockefeller was asked what he thought of Mr. Field's attitude. "Oh, I entirely agree with Mr. Field," said Mr. Rockefeller, "I don't care at all what happens to Mr. Field's money." CRITIC

THE HOME GUARD HALBERDIER

Lord Croft, Under-Secretary, War Office, favours the pike, after using bombs, to repel invaders
When it was suggested that supplies of pikes were not available, he replied: "I did not know that."—*News Chronicle.*

SOME talk of Spain's guerillas, or the Soviet partisans,
And uses of new-fangled arms in high defensive plans,
But they cannot match the bill-hook or the pole-axe or the spear,
With a bow wow wow and a bow wow wow of the Home Guard halberdier.

Then down with the bayonet and up with the pike,
When the foe is at spear-length you know where to strike,
For mechanised shock-troops, our spokesmen reveal,
Can never stand up to the touch of cold steel.

The harquebus and blunderbuss if once invaders land,
Will fail to prove decisive when the fight is hand-to-hand,
Not culverins nor falconets will sweep our island clear,
With a bow wow wow and a bow wow wow, but the Home Guard halberdier.

Then down with the halberd and out with the knife
And cut the foe down as he runs for his life,
For what bomb-throwing squads most avoid and dislike
Is the Home Guard on guard at the end of a pike.

In overseas defensive stands, in spite of some success,
The lack of pikes and hatpins has occasioned us distress,
For when the front was broken there was no one in the rear,
With a bow wow wow and a bow wow wow, like the Home Guard halberdier.

So down with the cleaver and up with the pin,
When the foe's at arm's length you can stick it right in,
Then down from the cliff-top and over the dyke,
And each Home Guard goes home with a head on a pike. SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Muriel Grainger.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

With her expressive delivery, Miss Mackie recited heart-stirring poems appropriate to the present mood, such as Masefield's "Unity" and "A Prayer for the Ordinary Woman." A remarkable piece of realism was her accurate reproduction of the notes of a thrush.

At the end the members of the society felt convinced, even more strongly than before, that poetry is an aid to victory.—*Brighton and Hove Herald.*

With respect to war aims, it is useless to talk vaguely of new orders or of making the world safe for democracy. The job our statesmen are paid to do is to see that the world, as God made it, is safe for Great Britain.—*Everybody's Weekly.*

War Office Admits Officers Need Intelligence.—Headline in *Daily Herald.*

How will the churches face up to the great responsibility that is theirs at this time? The fact that a man of the eminence of Professor Joad sees the need of their help and work, and publicly proclaims it, should spur them to greater effort—and to success.—*Bradford Telegraph and Argus.*

"There is a war on, and it is a people's war as well as ours," remarked Mr. Tertius Spencer, J.P.—*Burnley Express and News.*

An official of one of the Bristol Socialist parties telephoned Transport House, London, the national headquarters of the Socialist Party, yesterday, to ask for advice about his Member of Parliament, Sir Stafford Cripps.

"May we from Bristol," he asked, "attend a reception to Sir Stafford Cripps down here on Sunday?"

There was a consultation at Transport House. This reply was given: "You may attend a reception to the ex-ambassador to the Soviet Union, but you may not attend a reception to Sir Stafford Cripps, ex-member of our party."—*Scottish Daily Express.*

Whatever eventuates, one fact stands out clearly—that grave as the reverses in the Far East to the United Nations have been, the sooner we can strike hard and effectively at Japan the sooner will that part of our world problem be solved and the lighter the total task.—*Nottingham Guardian.*

The war against Japan must be won, if only to restore white prestige in South Africa.—*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury.*

Complained Mr. C. Copson, a Rothley (Leicester) farmer, at a meeting of farmers at Leicester yesterday:—

"My two land girls wanted to bath before the kitchen fire, and I had to wait outside in the snow. One, a London actress, shouted through the key-hole, 'Come in and dry my back.' That is not the type of girl wanted."—*Sunday Express.*

Home Guard men on the invasion coastline of Lincolnshire want to form a company of archers. Yesterday they showed their skill with bow and arrow to a general inspecting armoury. The general was impressed. Lieutenant Davey said to an *Express* reporter: "On a moonlight night a skilled archer could kill silently from a distance."—*Daily Express.*

IMPERIAL WAR CABINET

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

BRITAIN is the foremost and most powerful of the several free and independent nations banded together by a unifying constitution in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Mr. Churchill wields all the powers of Britain at war. He disposes of the forces, the policy in action and the resources of all Britain's dependencies. All this by virtue of a vote of confidence in the House of Commons. It is as when the Roman Senate bade the Consul see to it that the Republic should take no hurt from dangers that threatened—and thereby created a dictatorship terminable at will.

The Prime Minister's high office depends upon his continuing to be the repository of the confidence of the House of Commons. What were the bases of that confidence? The debate showed much of them, though, by the Speaker's ruling, the House was forbidden to inscribe aught on the record save a simple "yes" or "no" on the motion of confidence. But the speeches set forth what was in the minds of him who invited and of those who bestowed confidence. Let us scrutinise on these lines one topic of absolutely vital importance. What of the other free and independent nations of the British Commonwealth? How is their action in wartime linked with that of Britain? How is it meeting the stresses of war, this new Constitution of the Empire, initiated in 1917 in the earlier Great War and completed in 1931? The weighty letter by General Sir Hubert Gough, published in this journal last week, raised the issue, "Why is there no Imperial War Cabinet to consult and act on behalf of the Empire?" He wrote as one of those who, having spent their lives in the service of the Empire, "care little for party politics, but do care tremendously for the British Empire or the British Commonwealth of Nations." Why, indeed? It was an Imperial War Cabinet that was the symbol and the supreme organ of the Empire on its re-birth as the Commonwealth. It was the means unanimously adopted to avert disintegration.

In opening the confidence debate, Mr. Churchill used these words: "We have always been ready to form an Imperial War Cabinet containing the Prime Ministers of the four Dominions." The only reason given for not doing so was "unhappily, it was not possible to get them all here together at once." He added: "General Smuts may not be able to come over from South Africa, and Mr. Mackenzie King could, unfortunately, stay only for a short time." There had been occasional visits from others. He continued: "The Australian Government have now asked specifically 'that an accredited representative of the Commonwealth Government should have the right to be heard in the War Cabinet in the formulation and the direction of policy.' We have, of course, agreed to this." New Zealand had followed suit with the like result. "The same facilities will, of course, be available to Canada and South Africa." The Prime Minister finished with the subject by saying that the presence of Dominion representatives could not in any way affect the collective responsibility of His Majesty's Servants in Great Britain to Crown and Parliament. Most people assumed that this meant an Imperial War Cabinet. Not so, however. The sequel shows that Mr. Churchill did *not* mean an Imperial War Cabinet. He meant that the British War Cabinet should continue in supreme control of the Empire (or Commonwealth) war effort and should have the sole right to take decisions. The Dominion representatives would be welcome as guests and would be summoned when the matters under

discussion might interest them. In that discussion they could say their say, but in the resulting decision they would have no say. The Commonwealth would be ruled by Britain alone, just as Britain is ruled by Mr. Churchill.

This is a truly deplorable result from the standpoint of the new Imperialism. It will scarcely be acceptable to the majority of M.P.s—especially having regard to the thin quality of the dialectic which supports it. Let it be remembered that the Imperial War Cabinet of 1917–1918 consisted of the British War Cabinet plus Dominion Premiers (or their specially accredited substitutes) and a representative of India. In this war the Dominions were not summoned to an Imperial War Cabinet. The British War Cabinet carried on, and an occasional Dominion Premier paying a brief visit was invited to be present just as a distinguished visitor is sometimes asked to take a seat on the Bench by the presiding Judge. For many months now, with a brief intermission, Australia has had her (then) Premier —Mr. Menzies, K.C.—or her Special Envoy, Sir Earle Page, in London and enjoying, guest-like, this courteously tolerant reception. And whilst this was so, Australia, apparently dissatisfied, "asked specifically" for "the right to be heard in the War Cabinet . . ."—and Mr. Churchill agreed. But, from what he told the House subsequently, on February 5th, he means that everything is to remain exactly as before. Is that what Parliament had understood? Is that what Australia meant? Is it conceivable that Australia, abandoning her equality of status, was asking for the right to submit pleas to the British Cabinet? Her request logically implied the re-creation of the Imperial War Cabinet as in 1917–1918 because a War Cabinet in London becomes *ipso facto* an Imperial War Cabinet once the Dominion Premiers have the right to be heard in it "in the formulation and direction of policy" —that is, in consultation and in execution of concerted measures.

What is the clue to this tragically unsatisfactory affair? Are we to accept the broad hint in Mr. Menzies' article, *Times* of January 21st last? He described a point "strongly held in responsible quarters in London," a point supposedly constitutional: to wit, that an Australian representative "would doubtless be responsible to the Australian Government, not accountable to Mr. Churchill; this would upset the normal constitutional practice, first by impairing the normal responsibility of the Cabinet of the United Kingdom to the Parliament of the United Kingdom; secondly, by impairing the normal authority of the Prime Minister of that Cabinet." Have the earlier Imperial War Cabinets and all the Imperial Conferences since 1917 sat in vain? Was the Statute of Westminster a thing of no account? Fresh minds are assuredly needed to shed constitutional light in "responsible quarters in London."

A new World Order is soon to be devised—a system in which there are to be freedom and equality and collaborative action between independent nations, great and small, rich and poor, strong and weak, on a basis of justice. Our British Commonwealth of Nations should be a working model of how in actual practice some at least of these ideals could be realised. Is it to be allowed to break down now in its first main test, not from any inherent defects, not from the weight of any serious obstacles, but just as a victim of a species of arrogant negligence? Mr. Churchill has announced that he seeks victory for "traditional" Britain. He did not tell us that he proposed to wipe out a hundred and sixty years or so of constitutional progress and to hark back upon the traditions of George III and Lord North, who split the English-speaking world.

IS FARMING WORTH WHILE?

[This is the first of three articles by Sir Daniel Hall on the Future of British Agriculture.]

Amid all the talk of reconstruction to follow the war no demands are more definite than those of the farming community—landlords, farmers and labourers—that their future position shall be assured and that they shall not again be "left in the lurch" to suffer the wild fluctuations of prices which have prevailed in the twenty years between the wars. The opportunities for an immediate settlement are tempting. Farmers themselves are making money such as they have never known before, landlords find rents coming in without delays or rebates, farms can be relet or sold at high figures, even the workers are receiving a minimum wage which is nearly double the pre-war rate. Public sympathy is with the men, it is felt that justice is being done to a valuable element in the population which in the past has been shamefully neglected. The public also is being stimulated to take an interest in farming itself. Book follows book from the press, written by men who find that farming can be made to pay on its library output. Their thesis is "The good earth that breeds good men"; they exalt the native worth and rugged independence of the peasant as compared with the machine minder or the suburban clerk who takes his ideas from the cheap newspaper that he absorbs on his daily train journey. This idealisation of the countryman has been common form since the days of Virgil and Horace, yet individuality and character are not his monopoly but part of the British stock, whether town or country bred.

What the countryside has been short of has been the opportunity to give these qualities play; too many farm workers would subscribe to the answer of one of them when asked if there were any wild flowers where he was working, "There's nowt here but muck and hard work."

The general public is tolerant of the profits accruing to agriculture because they are being encouraged to believe that farmers are adding substantially to the food supplies of the country by increased cultivation, though it is puzzled to understand why the milk supply, the most vital of all necessities for a wartime population, has diminished rather than increased. Do we not also owe our unstinted allowance of bread to the Navy and the Merchant Service?

But the characteristic feature of the case put forward by the farming community is an agreement that the industry cannot continue without State support, that it has ceased to be an economic proposition capable of standing up to world competition. What the farmers' friends are looking for is a tri-partite alliance of landlowners, farmers, and workers, to share equitably in a pool created by prices for agricultural products guaranteed or subsidised by the State, i.e., by the general taxpayer. Before the war the farmers' organisations at their Sydney Conference had come to recognise the necessity of providing a British market for the produce of the Dominions and of foreign countries such as Argentina, as the only means by which they could buy our manufactures and pay the interest on the capital we had invested there. All the British farmers asked for was that a certain fraction of the market should be fenced off for British producers, and that for this fraction prices equivalent to costs of production plus a reasonable profit should be established. The present Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Robert Hudson, has put the situation firmly before the public. "Give up," he has said in effect, "the old cry for cheap food, it has brought ruin to the farming population which is a necessary element in a stable and prosperous nation. Cheap food is accompanied by a low standard of living. It is possible to effect economies in the present costs of the distribution of food, but these economies are needed for the better remuneration of farmers and in their turn of the landlords and workers." Mr. Hudson has been challenged over this pronouncement that cheap food involves a low standard of living; indeed, such a statement is presumably no more than one of those intellectual levities which Matthew Arnold long ago accused English politicians of allowing themselves.

The Minister's thesis received emphatic dissent in the *Economist*, as far at least as dear food is concerned, but that journal went on to restate what may be called the financial and industrial view of agriculture so forcibly put before farmers by the late Mr. Neville Chamberlain in his speech at Kettering in 1938. He stressed the necessity of providing a market for our customers and debtors overseas; the industrial aspect of Great Britain must be paramount, we cannot afford an agriculture that would injure the capacity of other countries to absorb our manufactured goods and pay for them in food. So the *Economist* stands for a small select agriculture and does not deny that it may require artificial support. Thus it may fit in with the policy of the National Farmers' Union, to create a ring fence round British agriculture reserved from competition with its own special prices, provided that these are not allowed materially to raise the costs of food to the public. Thus, in the case of wheat where we import four-fifths of our consumption, a small levy on the imported wheat can be handed over to the British producers without raising the price greatly to the consumers, e.g., farmers could be given an extra ten shillings a quarter at the cost of raising the general price of wheat by half a crown.

What, then, does this policy, in which the *Economist*, the industrialists, and the farmers seem to agree, amount to? It means creating within the general productive framework of the State a small sheltered community, protected from the vicissitudes of competitive world prices, secured of the remuneration it thinks it deserves, strong in its weakness to plead for generous treatment. It would have no motive for progress, no need for internal organisation except a political organisation to keep on asking for more.

Before we can agree to this demand a searching examination of its basis must be made. Is it true that farming in this country is necessarily unremunerative, are the economists right in postulating that agriculture is so inferior in real productive capacity to the manufacturing industries that it can be sacrificed to them? This latter contention has never been fully investigated by the economists, possibly because the data are imperfect and some of the most cogent have only recently become available. The financial answer is plain enough; the entrepreneurs in command of capital do not consider the return on a given sum of money invested in farming will be equal to that obtainable by investment in steel or textiles or their kindred industries. It does not follow that this opinion is sound; it may be only that farming is so long-term a business and so devoid of "plums" that it cannot be made attractive to the investor. The real question is whether the net output from a unit of labour is lower in agriculture than in manufacturing industries, or to turn the problem into its crudest form will the product of a man's labour employed, say, in building bridges to be sold overseas, buy more food than he could grow by working on the land for the same period? This question has never been settled against agriculture nor indeed the simpler question of why it should not profit

the manufacturing interest to be paid in food raised at home instead of abroad.

The first question is even more pertinent. Why should farmers have agreed with the governing classes of this country—the financiers, the bankers, the industrialists and the lawyers—that agriculture here is dead, dead in the sense that it cannot compete with that of other countries? These competitors are credited with various advantages, with better climates, with wide open spaces, with cheap labour and the absence of expenses such as education and other social services. As to cheap labour our most serious competitors are our own Dominions, where wage rates are far higher than our own. It is sometimes argued that the competitive wheat, meat and milk products, are being produced overseas below cost, at the expense of the land itself, by pioneer farmers who move on as soon as they have skimmed the resources of the virgin soil. But if ever this was true it no longer remains so. We know that in all countries the good farming land is now occupied and even second-class land has become scarce; the cheap land that can be exploited by processes akin to mining is no longer available. Why then should we despair of farming in Great Britain? Farming as it is now being practised in Great Britain has not reached finality nor indeed is the only way in which our land can be handled. It is indeed clear that there is something wrong with the industry. But we can bend our minds to finding the sources of the trouble and removing them, instead of resorting to charity for the distressed agriculturists. But whether farming or manufacturing is the more profitable to the State, one broad fact confronts us. We had before the war, as we shall again unless we take appropriate measures, great areas of under-farmed and even derelict land, we had and shall have men out of employment; it cannot be uneconomic to put the two together and to make productive this portion of the national estate.

A. Daniel Hall

HONEST MAN

Honesty, they used to say in an age in which rash generalisations were still popular, is the best policy. Even at that time, however, a carping minority found fault with the statement. Some maintained that it was untrue. Others declared that it was vicious to incite men to become virtuous for selfish ends.

As regards the truth of the proverb, I should be inclined to adopt the tactics of a famous professor of our own time, and to say that it all depends on what you mean by "best." If you mean best for the purposes of making a fortune, it would be difficult to prove that honesty has always been better than its opposite. Many great fortunes have been founded on honest dealing, but many others have been made by rogues who, if they had been honest men, would have been poorer. There was a wealthy provincial shopkeeper of the last generation who could not sell an umbrella or a handkerchief during the sales season without cheating his customers. Many a company promoter, too, has discovered that dishonesty has its uses, and that even in bankruptcy a thoroughly dishonest man can afford to live luxuriously in the West End while honester boys with whom he was once at school have grown up to be slaves in the effort to make ends meet.

If by "best" we mean, however, best for the purpose of having a good conscience—said by some to be an indispensable aid to happiness—there may be more to be said in favour of honesty than appears on the surface. A good conscience is certainly necessary to happiness if your conscience happens to be sensitive. On the other hand, if your conscience is not sensitive, it is possible that it makes little difference what you do. It may even cease to distinguish between good and evil, and the possession of a conscience of this kind can often enjoy at the same time the pleasure of indulging in sharp practice and the pleasure of feeling virtuous. Did Mr. Pecksniff's conscience interfere with his happiness in the days of his prosperity? It is extremely doubtful. Even so, it may be argued that the happiness of an honest man is of a finer and more enviable type than the happiness of a Pecksniff—even of a Pecksniff who is not ultimately found out. To believe so is only a matter of faith, but those of us, whatever our morals, who remember the lessons we learned at Sunday-school possess this faith.

As for its being ignoble to advocate honesty on the ground that it is the best policy, I cannot assent to this. I hold that, the more arguments there are in favour of being virtuous, the better. We cannot all be virtuous from an abstract love of virtue, but some of us can get as far as the foothills of virtue through some form of self-interest, such as the hope of gain or the fear of being found out. Prove to us not only that virtue is the chief moral end of man, but that it pays, and we shall be doubly intent on modelling ourselves on Aristides. Take, for example, one of the most effective arguments that have ever been put forward in advocacy of the virtue of courage: "The coward dies a hundred deaths; the brave man dies but once." Here we have a perfect example of the plain prosaic mathematics of virtue, making it clear to us that it pays a hundred times better to be courageous than to be a coward. Achilles, no doubt, would have scorned such an appeal to his lower nature, but we are not all Achilleses, and with most of us, in our progress towards virtue, every little helps.

Take, again, the vice of gluttony—in peace-time. The Harley Street doctor, confronted by a mottled-faced glutton, knows that it is useless to orate to him on the virtue of plain living. The only practical way to deal with the man is to persuade him that it will pay him in health and happiness to cut down his seven courses at the dinner-table to five—to eat no soup and very few potatoes and to skip the savoury. The doctor, indeed, does not try to ennoble his patient, but to tempt him, even if he has to scare him, into virtue. Many a man's life has been saved by making him afraid to eat a milk-pudding. As a result, not only does he himself feel better, but his wife and children feel better, as they are freed from his dyspeptic fears and nerve-storms. Even vegetarians do not disdain the utilitarian argument in their advocacy of the virtue of abstinence from flesh-food. Not only do they tell us that it is right to abstain from meat, but they point out such facts as that a vegetarian Finn once ran four miles at a faster rate than any of his competitors, and that some other vegetarian once walked a hundred miles at the age of eighty. These, it must be admitted, are pretty good reasons for eating vegetables—reasons that are much more likely to convince members of the M.C.C., for example, than vague humanitarian maunderings.

If people can be lured into virtue by such utilitarian methods, I for one see nothing ignoble in their employment. The higher ethics are obviously not enough. We have all known the Ten Commandments from our childhood up, and we have broken any of them as soon as we thought it the best policy—the policy that made for our happiness—to break them. Not all of us, of course, but quite a lot of us. Happiness, that will-o'-the-wisp, enticed us first, perhaps, into breaking the Sabbath, and, alas, we did not stop there. We may have had twinges of conscience at first: I knew a Somerset man who told me that, when he first went to a Sunday performance in the theatre he was afraid, all the time that he sat through it, that the house would go on fire—a sure sign that his conscience was not yet atrophied. To-day we are faced with a much worse plague than Sabbath-breaking—an apparently nation-wide epidemic of stealing. Almost every paper we open contains a story of some breach of the commandment "Thou shalt not steal." Stealing seems to have become one of the spare-time occupations of the age. Youths with too much money seem to steal for the fun of the thing. There are thefts from houses during the black-out and thefts from goods trains and railway stations at all hours of the day and night. The more cunning thieves enter the black markets or rob the public by selling fraudulent substitute foods. Reading these stories, you would think we were living in the golden age of dishonesty. Stealing may not be more prevalent than it used to be, but we have never had so much proof of its prevalence. More than a millions pounds' worth of goods, we are told, are being stolen from the railways every year. Cigarettes, food and anything else that is handy—even if it is going to the troops—are stolen, and men with years of respectable character behind them take part in the stealing as if they were infected with a contagious disease. A magistrate complained some time ago that he was given the task of "sending to hard labour respectable men with first-class characters who have lost their pension rights and jobs," and one would imagine that there must be some germ in the air that attacks thousands even of ordinarily honest men and make it impossible for them to resist the temptation to pinch, pilfer and appropriate what is not their own.

What argument, then, will avail to turn the tide in favour of honesty? Is it a matter for the clergy and the school teachers to sing the praises of honesty till the rest of us fall in love with it, and till our blood responds to the petition: "To keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil speaking, lying and slandering"? That they should do so is urgently necessary; but I think that, in addition to this, more should be done to prove that honesty is the best policy—that dishonesty does not pay. There have already been demands that this should be made clear to the organisers of the black market; and several writers, pointing out that in Russia such people would be shot, have maintained that in England they should at least be given long terms of penal servitude. And, if traffickers in the black market, why should not other pickers and stealers be similarly cajoled into virtue? Obviously they think that dishonesty is the best policy for the duration of the war. There must be some way of persuading them that honesty pays even better.

I do not say that the man who is honest merely because honesty is the best policy will be a positively good man. But at least he will be a negatively good citizen. The social virtues are not to be confused with the private virtues. They are in many cases a kind of minimum virtues that enable a man to live without injuring his neighbours. It is something surely not to be a murderer, not to be a thief, not to sell hooch at a night-club, not to keep the wireless going to the disturbance of one's neighbours. Such negations do not lead to the perfect life, but they help to make community life endurable. If they can be furthered by utilitarian methods, I for one am in favour of so fostering them. An honest man who is the noblest work of God may be a rare thing; but it ought at least to be possible by an appeal to self-interest to produce a race of honest men who are tolerable members of society. Y. Y.

THE MOVIES

"50 Below Zero" and "Wavell's 30,000," at the Empire
"Battlefields of the Pacific," March of Time
"A Musical Story," at London Pavilion
"Captains of the Clouds," at Warner's

Visitors to the Empire this week had to choose their times carefully. There was a dreadful English "feature" to be avoided—*Breach of Promise*; see, said one's friends, that you miss *Breach of Promise*; get in before, or after, or somehow round it. Two documentaries rewarded our pains. 50 *Below Zero* is a record of the Red Army's first Finnish campaign, and it captures the realities of winter fighting as the over-dramatised *Behind the Lines of the Enemy*, in my opinion, never did. The film was made by eleven cameramen who went with the troops into battle carrying a camera over one shoulder and a rifle over the other. They have done an astonishing job, and the sequences recording the capture of the Mannerheim Line provide the most vivid close-up of the war that has yet been seen. The white-hooded soldiers cluster behind tanks in the deep snow and advance to the accompaniment of heavy artillery fire and air bombing. The barrage is terrific; even so, it is a little difficult afterwards, when we are shown inside the massive steel and concrete forts, to see how the Soviet Army can have captured these positions in a matter of days. The audience followed this film in a hush that signified more than the icy impact of war; memories of "little Finland" had to be undone, and the management of the Empire are to be congratulated on showing a film which will help average audiences to readjust their sentiments.

Wavell's 30,000 provides a contrast in temperatures, but it, too, is a remarkably successful record of a campaign. The material in this case has been taken mostly from newsreels, and with the help of a map or two and some cunningly interwoven narrative a clear and dramatic story of Wavell's tactics against a huge Italian army is presented. Here again, with Rommel's successes interposing, some awkward moments threatened; fortunately *Wavell's* 30,000 gives a very clear and objective picture of the First Campaign, and there are no blithe idiocies from "a Voice in Cairo". This film is the work of the Crown Film Unit. Both 50 *Below Zero* and *Wavell's* 30,000 disappear, together with the snickers of *Breach of Promise*, from the Empire programme on Friday; but they will be found elsewhere, together or apart, during the next few days. The new March of Time, though made presumably in a hurry, is as succinct and factual as usual. It might be described as a last-minute tour of the important areas in the Pacific affected: Singapore, the Dutch Indies, Pearl Harbour, Japan, the Philippines, Australia. All the scenes, of course, are pre-war. Here, too, maps and commentary point the drama of events.

A Musical Story took me by surprise. Instead of the rather fruity gambols which, rightly or wrongly, I have come to expect of Soviet screen relaxation, here is a delightful film, to follow in the wake of *Sous les Toits de Paris*. True, the directors, Ivanovsky and Rappoport, lack Clair's precise sensibility, but *A Musical Story* springs from the same friendly realisation of town life: a taxi garage (in this case), crowded flats, evenings on the river, bus and embankment, rehearsals of an operatic society, two lovers shying off one another for anguished months at a time. The taxi driver who becomes opera singer is as captivating as Préjean, and has, moreover, a remarkably fine tenor voice. The music clusters round a performance of Tchaikovsky's *Eugène Onegin*, most enchanting of operatic episodes. Delicious arguments behind the scenes, in midnight streets, on staircases: for once, in a Russian talkie, we strain beyond the English titles to catch turns of the original.

Except that it is in technicolour and has James Cagney, *Captains of the Clouds* is the usual filmics of the air. The tough playboy won't knuckle down to training, gets his best friend killed, is kicked out of the Service, and comes back to sacrifice himself in a spectacular crash with a Messerschmitt. The early scenes of Canadian bush-flying and some flying sequences in colour are the best.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Goodnight, Children," at the New Theatre.

What say the critics? Amusing, but thin. Love stories trivial. Plot negligible. And so forth. True enough, but not important. Priestley is full of vitality and fun and that, in the devitalising circumstances of to-day, is a lot. Next he has the courage and vigour to satirise the B.B.C., which is now the main patron and source of income for the entertainer and professional publicist. Nor is the satire wrapped up or directed merely at the incidental comicalities of studio life in Barsetshire. It is outspoken and serious as well as funny. Mr. Priestley's point is the plight of the artist and producer who comes to broadcasting with fine ideas; released from the commercial stage, he or she looks forward to the wonderful opportunities for developing a new form of art with unlimited money, the best actors and the largest public. No commercial interference, no dependence on the taste of those who can afford to buy stall tickets. In *Goodnight, Children*, three producers explain to a newly appointed Assistant Director-General of the English Broadcasting Company (without knowing whom they are talking to) just how the E.B.C. kindly but firmly throw the suffocating weight of a gentlemanly wet-blanket over independent thought and artistic sensibility. Anything is allowed, we are told, as long as the vital spark is successfully extinguished.

Certainly Mr. Priestley has a point here. The new Assistant D.-G. (who comes to the E.B.C. from the Ministry of Fisheries) is a topical figure. The Civil Servant from the Fisheries pretends no knowledge of broadcasting or entertainment. The point is fairly taken. But I should have liked Mr. Priestley to make more of his satire by giving the devil his due. One wants Sir Reginald or Commander Copley, or one of the other administrators of the E.B.C. to state their defence, to consider how much artistic talent that would otherwise have had no chance has been encouraged by broadcasting, to remind these disgruntled producers that artistic frustration is certainly no less common in the commercial cinema. Then (but perhaps no one but Mr. Shaw could write a speech this length without ruining his play) there might be a discussion of the relationship between public, government and broadcasting, and a conclusion that only a very able and determined as well as a very enlightened B.B.C. direction could have braved the public outcry, as well as the private pulls, that will have been evoked by the deliberate cultivation of free artistic gifts. And to be quite fair, Mr. Priestley should have also shown us an "awkward" star broadcaster.

The cast is admirable. The prize perhaps goes to Charles Mortimer who, as the Regional Director and ex-naval Commander, has got the B.B.C. manner to perfection. Naunton Wayne is excellent as the disillusioned producer with a caustic wit and an unsmiling face, and Miss Gillian Lind produces precisely the right atmosphere of good nature and wise-cracking frustration. George Cole as the "effects boy" is another success. But it is unfair to particularise further; the cast is of a very high level. There is one very serious blight on the production. The two rustics, grand-daughter and the ancient player of a village instrument called the "sarpent," are for some reason or other produced in the spirit of the wildest charade. They are farther from the reality and less interesting as satirical types than the conventional Frenchman of the 19th-century music-hall. Some Barset girls and old men still talk Barset, but that does not mean that they resemble the village idiots of fiction. This touch of sheer burlesque is quite out of place in a play that is otherwise good comedy.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

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Correspondence

THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY

SIR,—I have been listening attentively for some weeks to the B.B.C. broadcasts to Germany and have come to the conclusion that they do not fulfil their object, which is, of course, that Hitler must be defeated so that the German people, and all those at present enslaved by him, may, with the help of Great Britain and the United States of America, enjoy peace, liberty and justice in a new world order. I do not think that the broadcasts by Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Officers, etc., who in excellent German reiterate with painful conscientiousness what Hitler has done to deceive them, or details about the sinking of Italian ships, or R.A.F. attacks on naval bases in France are sufficient motives for adhering to our cause.

Contrary to what so many people seem to think, the Germans are not all benighted sadists. They are, however, in their majority sentimentalists, and the wide spread of inferiority complex from which they suffer is compensated for by their need of discipline.

When I was in Berlin shortly after the last war, my landlady said, pointing to a huge chromolithograph representing the Kaiser and which hung in the place of honour in her "beste Stube," "Oh, if we only had the dear Kaiser back." (Her only son had been killed in the war.) In this case her sentimentality found an outlet in the legends about the Kaiser's home life. His wife, whom he rationed when her waistline exceeded the permitted dimension, his five (brave) sons, his only daughter, who had just had, or was just going to have, her first child. There were also his good looks. That lovely moustache! Her need of discipline was satisfied by the martial appearance of her idol, his fine white uniform, his breast covered with medals and ribbons, his shining silver helmet and the field-marshal's baton in his unwithered hand . . . . If the German Republic had distributed any sort of fancy dress uniforms freely, with medals attached, and had ordered a band to march through every town and village playing patriotic songs on Saturday evenings, Hitler would never have had a chance. I was in Berlin again when he put out feelers. About twenty handsome young men in black uniforms with silver buttons, carrying torches and singing patriotic songs, used to march through the main streets followed by large crowds, especially by young men. After four unhappy and drab years the people wanted some sort of glamour and excitement. The leaders of the Republic did not, unfortunately, understand the psychology of their own people.

To return to the present; could not the German people be told on the air what their country and their lives would be like in a new and democratic world order? Could one not appeal to their sentiments, speak to them about their children, their old people, speak to them about songs and laughter, about evenings without air raids in their beer Keller? The Russian broadcasts to the German people about their dead are most moving. Could we not enlarge upon them by speaking about the living and their future in a Nazi-purged world?

And what are we doing to comfort and encourage the hundreds and thousands of anti-Nazis and anti-Fascists scattered throughout the world? Everyone, everywhere ends by knowing what is said on the wireless. My own experience has taught me this. (I returned from France in August of this year.) Someone always manages to listen in and news spreads quickly. The news seeps through even in concentration camps. These poor people are suffering the acutest mental anguish wherever they are and we all know how they are treated in German and French concentration camps. Could we not try to give them some hope by telling them about the sort of future for which all decent people will collaborate, speak to them too about peace and justice and liberty?

When the terms of the Atlantic Charter were made known to the world, it was commented upon or rather made known by the B.B.C. broadcasters to all the countries on the air, for a few days. Surely its clauses should be a constantly recurring theme (even

if many of us think they do not go far enough) for broadcasts to Germany and the occupied countries, for they do hold out the hope for a better world and so must bring comfort and encouragement to the oppressed peoples.

Oxford. CHARLOTTE VANDERVELDE

BREAD

SIR,—Because farmers have been requested to thresh early, Professor Marrack assumes that the shortage of wheat is so serious that we must all eat brown bread or be content with potatoes. Surely this is going a bit far. It is common knowledge that our stocks of flour are high. And the Professor completely ignores my two main points, which were (1) the greatly superior keeping qualities of white flour, and (2) the effect of a policy of increased extraction upon animal feeding supplies.

With his contention that the quality of wheatmeal bread should be maintained at a high level, I am in complete agreement. The objective of the "bread" policy of the Ministry of Food was to get the best of both the brown and the white worlds.

I still think that the vast majority of people in this country prefer the latter. I am old enough to remember the "standard" bread of the last war.

R.A.F. Station. ROBERT BOOTHBY

ANGLO-SAXON UNION

SIR,—It will be helpful in avoiding future misunderstanding if it be understood that the term "federal union" is now being used not doctrinally but in various different and equally legitimate ways. The *Times* of the 24th Jan. headed an account of the Polish-Czech confederation with the words "Federal Union." I submit that the *Times* was entirely right in doing this since, presuming Federation to be the *agreed goal*, all steps to that end such as Confederation, "Commonwealth model" union, common or reciprocal citizenship, etc., can properly be classified by their final causes.

Canada, it will be recalled, is like Switzerland in official terminology, a "Confederation," although in practice a federation. It will further be noted that the Poles and Czechs, by including economic and social legislation within the ambit of the confederate power, go here *further* than Mr. Lionel Curtis' scheme for Imperial union with a common legislature, outlined in his pamphlet *Action*, although Mr. Curtis is usually accounted a federal unionist. The real issue is whether we are going to begin anywhere. Assuredly those who do not in fact begin anywhere will end nowhere. I want us for ourselves to begin with Anglo-Saxon Union as an example to all, concurrent with "Balkan Union" and the rest and as nucleus for future world federation, a reunited nation amid the united nations. I know, however, that those who take a "provincial European" outlook will disagree as well as those who stand by sovereignty, French, British, Scottish and the rest. The two dangers are of being in such practical disagreement on the goal as issued in America in civil conflict, only solved by a strong federal solution; and of endless arid discussions, as in Germany, on the themes of *Staatenbund* and *Bundesstaat*.

In support of Mr. Moore it should be said that too vague a proposal, which does nothing to define State Rights, may end not in a loose association, but, for military and technological reasons, in a highly centralised control for "the integration of effort," which is quite the opposite of that for which its proponents bargain.

2, Cheyne Walk, S.W.3. GEORGE CATLIN

MEMORY OF MR. CHAMBERLAIN

SIR,—As your editorial note implies, Lady Oxford's letter is a two-edged compliment to the Government she so admired. For her main defence of it—that with majorities of 425 and, after 1935, of 247, it could not carry out its policies over the heads of the Opposition—is the sort of indictment which has given the candid friend such a bad name.

The National Government was not wicked, says Lady Oxford in effect; it was merely flaccid; it lacked courage; it made a mockery of its constitutional obligations. It played the role of Samson running round to find a barber.

Lady Oxford's facts, however, prove on examination to deny the National Government even this cold comfort. In the simple statement that only one Liberal member voted for conscription she will find, on consulting the division list for April 27th, 1939, that she is just six hundred per cent. out.

As to Liberal opposition to "every proposal for preparation for war," one can only prescribe a course of reading Hansard. Lady Oxford will there find that the Ministry of Supply, which was given reluctant and unpromising birth as late as August, 1939, had been advocated over and over again by the Liberal Party since November, 1936. It was in support of their demand that Mr. Churchill appealed in November, 1938, "in minatory and comminatory terms" for 50 Tory back-benchers to follow him into the Liberal lobby. Only two of them were prepared to back him up.

Side by side with the present news from the Far East, Lady Oxford might also care to read the speeches on air power by Sir Archibald Sinclair and Sir Hugh Seely (now Lord Sherwood), and their constant exposure of the Government's soothing assurances that we would maintain parity with the Luftwaffe.

H. HODGKINSON

FREE LIBRARIES

SIR,—May I protest against the recent action of Chislehurst and Sidcup Urban District Council in removing Federal Union pamphlets placed in the Public Library with the consent of the Librarian and further in resolving that "no pamphlets of a political, denominational, or controversial nature be placed in the branch libraries without the prior consent of the chairman of the committee." This is not only discrimination against Federal Union, it is discrimination against Freedom. N. R. MANSER

Sidcup.

PLUTO AND PERSEPHONE

SIR,—Are we expected to take your correspondent Miss Elizabeth Denby, seriously, or is the article just another Greek Fable?

It is difficult to believe that in 1942 one could write so vigorously and authoritatively with so little background. There have been so many publications, from the Barlow Commission to *Replanning Britain*, revealing statistics concerning numbers of insured employees in various industries, increases and decreases, etc., that the classification into two—Pluto and Persephone—seems unpardonable. Even in the frozen north we have heard of electricity, the grid, and hydro-electricity. The conclusions of the article could only be described in logic as "a syllogism based on a wrong premise."

"Pluto needs a blood transfusion." Persephone—we may look on her beauty during our summer vacation! For this Miss Denby should be elected an honorary life member of the Highland landlords' (depopulation) association. "The trouble with you Chicago people," said Satan to the newcomer, "is that you think you are the best people down here, whereas you are merely the most numerous."

And so, to quote Miss Denby's own figures, four-fifths of us are to remain in Hades. (The analogy is her own). Our brave new world will be Hell replanned, presided over by Pluto rejuvenated.

Glasgow. JEAN MANN

SIR,—It seems to me that the most important point at issue between Dr. Robson and Miss Denby is that of whether or not the present distribution of population and industry is to be accepted by post-war planners or not. Now, it is a fact that a number of causes, including economic causes, have given rise to a migration of industry from the northern industrial towns towards the south and midlands in the last twenty years. It is also a fact that this movement

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JONATHAN CAPE

is associated with the increasing predominance of the "foot-loose" light industries in our national economy and that this tendency seems likely to develop further in the future. Therefore, taking a long view, there seems little reason to anticipate that the maintenance of the present industrial areas will be an economic necessity. On the contrary, it may transpire that the maintenance, for instance, of an area like Tyneside can only be achieved by the process of subsidy. At the same time there is a virtual certainty that cities like Newcastle and Manchester will demand from any future planning authority that a "fair share" of industries shall be sent to them, so that their inhabitants may be spared the inconvenience of moving.

This brings me to my next point. Granted that the light industries are going to be ordered about, ought they, say, to be sent to Wigan instead of Norwich just because there is unemployment in Wigan? Is it nothing that one is a city surrounded by open country, with a clearer atmosphere, a warmer summer and about half the annual rainfall? For my part the quality of a city that can be summed up under the heading of amenity seems to be an important one, which should take precedence whenever economic considerations are evenly balanced. And as for the prospect of paying taxes so that folk can go on having the pleasure of living in cold, foggy, declining industrial areas! I object. I very much object.

80 Osborne Road, R. N. HAWARD
Newcastle-on-Tyne.

OIL

SIR,—Your contributor "X" in his articles "Combination in the Oil Industry" and "Oil in the War and After" raises one of this country's major post-war economic problems, that of the cost of distribution between the producer and the consumer.

It was obvious to all that before the war the distributive trades were growing at such a pace that the cost of maintaining them was out of all proportion to the benefits they conferred upon the consumer who had to pay for their maintenance. In short there were far too many middlemen all obtaining a "rake-off" which built up the price to the consumer.

The burden of distribution costs also falls unevenly upon various classes of consumer with the result that the individual who pays the "list price" for an article is paying far too high a proportion of distribution cost. The reason for this is because large consumers are such an attraction to the producers that cut-throat competition ensures the large consumer purchasing at very little over production cost and in some cases below. Someone has to pay the over-all distribution costs and the necessary profits and it is the small purchaser, the ordinary "man in the street."

Your contributor contends that the petrol distribution system is "extremely inefficient" and no one in the petrol distributing trade will quarrel with his statement. The number of petrol pumps operating in this country before the war was out of all proportion to potential, they were simply the result of competition run riot. If the purchaser of one gallon of petrol from one of these pumps knew the price per gallon paid by the large user, he would realise how much he was subsidising the distribution costs of this "extremely inefficient" system.

Again your contributor speaks the truth when he says "In the lubricating oil section of the trade the position is even worse." I wonder what the purchaser who pays 8s. 9d. for one gallon of lubricating oil would think if he knew that a vehicle manufacturer has thousands of gallons of that self-same oil given him in return for "a manufacturer's recommendation" which can be transferred to another oil company the following year for free oil, plus the purchase of a number of vehicles. Someone has to pay the oil companies' profits and not even oil companies have found the way of making money out of products they give away. The only method is a stepped-up price to the small retail purchaser.

Your contributor says "the garage commission on certain branded lubricating oils was more than double the total cost of the oil as received in this country." But he does not say why. Quantity purchasers and commercial users have to be supplied at substantial discounts. The retailer has to give these discounts in order to compete with the oil companies themselves for the business of the quantity buyer and commercial user. Someone has to pay the over-all distribution costs, so again it is the "man in the street."

To return to this state of affairs after the war would certainly, as your contributor says rightly, "be against the interests of the consuming public and a national calamity." It would be more than that, it would be stark madness, but I regret that no solution is offered. Is it supposed that the distributing side of the oil industry, in common with the distributive trades in general, will rationalise and discipline itself? A forlorn hope! Are we to have more bureaucratic control? Is there an alternative to Government licensing of all middlemen to make their number line up somewhere near potential? Is there an alternative to Government price control which will ensure that all purchasers large and small shall pay the same price for all commodities which are offered to the general public under a brand and fixed price, such as oil, petrol, motor vehicles, tyres, etc.? The cost to the general public of many articles is far too high, but included in that cost is the subsidy which the favoured purchaser receives.

Y. Z.

A WORKER'S WORLD

SIR,—There are about 800 young Jews, under the auspices of the Pioneer Organisations, some of this country, mostly coming from the countries under the Nazi yoke, who are preparing themselves for a life in the Kuzvoth (communal agricultural settlements) in Palestine. They are helping the Allied war effort by doing agricultural work with various farmers in the neighbourhood of their places. There are more than 15 of these groups in this country, comprising from about 10–70 Chalutzim (Pioneers), aged about 16–30 years. There is an equality of consumption by pooling their wages. Anybody who is in need of anything goes to the cashier and gets it — if the financial situation does permit it. A number of girls are looking after kitchen, house, laundry, but there are many girls doing agricultural work as well. Although working the whole day, many hours in the evenings and of the week-ends are spent with cultural work. There are lessons in English, Hebrew (the language of the Jewish Renaissance in Palestine), Socialism, history, literature, agriculture and various other subjects. The process of transforming these young Jews, many of them having been students, tradespeople, etc., and whose ancestors have never done a bit of manual labour, into good agricultural workers is often a very painful and long one. But behind this stands the great need of preparing the shape of a new Jewish life—normal, healthy and free—as it is being lived in the communal settlements of Palestine.

W. GOLDSTROM
The Agricultural Workers' Group,
Court House, Kempsey,
Nr. Worcester.

THE MANX SHEARWATER

SIR,—Mr. Desmond Hawkins, in his otherwise excellent review of R. M. Lockley's "Shearwaters," is surely unjust to the author, who has taught us so much about the habits of these amazing birds, in suggesting that he might deny that they nest on Lundy.

John Kearton, who came in 1928 and left us some beautiful photographs, was right. They do nest here. Richard Perry, who came in 1939, and with his wife spent five spring and summer months in continuous observation, estimated in his subsequent book, *Lundy, Isle of Puffins*, page 266, that there were approximately 1,000 breeding pairs.

MARTIN COLES HARMAN
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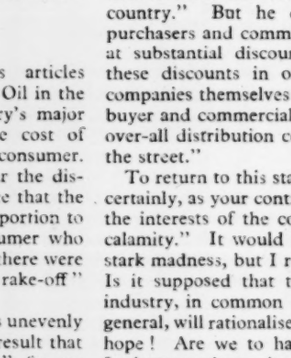
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BOOKS IN GENERAL

In *Above All Liberties*,* Mr. Alec Craig returns to the attack which he opened in *The Banned Books of England*—the attack on the habits of English law and official opinion when either are called upon to deal with the subject of obscene or pornographic literature. Is there anything more to be said about this depressing subject? Not very much. Though the law to-day turns a blind eye to things which would have incurred prosecution a decade ago, Judge Cockburn's fatal judgment still remains; and if we are now free to buy *Ulysses* and even Ellis's *Psychology of Sex*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is still not issued to the general public, and a book which contained 80 pages of matter discouraging to intending prostitutes—*To Beg I am Ashamed*—was actually banned in 1938. It is still open to the public informer to complain to the police about a large number of modern novels, and one has yet to see the magistrate who does not jump at the opportunity or the author who does not despair of getting justice in an English court when matters of sex are raised. The present position is the old hypocritical muddle, relieved by a sort of cad's agreement that literary and scientific works are permitted if they are expensive and can therefore not be obtained by the general public. What the magistrates do not suppress, the libraries do. Mr. Craig is especially interesting on the quiet suppression that goes steadily on in public libraries.

So one must commend him for pegging at it, and for tracing the sordid legal story from its ecclesiastical origins to the grotesque prosecutions and Dover bonfires of the last few years. (It is amusing and not surprising to find Defoe playing James Douglas to Curll of *The Dunciad*.) That another attack should still be necessary after the extraordinary revolution which has passed over our views on sex during the last generation is astonishing. The cause of sexual knowledge has triumphed to the point of boredom; the less popular cause of sexual pleasure has had a little success; why, then, has not the law caught up? It would seem that conscious sexual enlightenment is still confined to the educated, if not the rich. It would also seem that the rational attitude to sex may have left something out. How is it that the newspaper readers or the audience at the newsreel do not object to pictures of mutilated bodies—there was a picture in the papers a month or so back of six hanged men swinging obscenely from the branches of a tree—or to scenes of gross physical violence, but would certainly object to pictures of copulation in the press, and indeed do jib at the sight of pubic hair on a nude? Why is murder not thought disgusting in the sense that sexual intercourse is? It is not enough to invoke the argument of tabu or Christian teaching; to do that merely takes the subject back one remove more without settling anything.

The answer is indicated correctly in D. H. Lawrence's pamphlet on Pornography: pornographic literature incites to sexual desire and its relief by masturbation. What Lawrence does not see is that society is naturally on the side of "normal" sexual intercourse, and only disapproves of it when it is transferred to the imagination, where it is fruitless, whereas the sadistic impulses *need* to be sublimated. A good deal of the opposition to detailed sexual description in literature comes, indeed, not from the fanatics, the dirty-minded or the repressed, but from "normal" happy people who believe in real and not imaginary satisfactions. No "normal" person would read Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* with anything but pained laughter at the unreality of the sexual descriptions. We owe a lot to Lawrence for redeeming two or three forbidden words, which are noticeably losing their obscene associations not only among the educated but with a greater public; but Lawrence's whole, humourless, messianic attitude to sex must seem unreal and subversive because he isolates sex from the rest of life. One feels there is a parallel danger in many of the scientific sex manuals which are published; no doubt they are necessary, for the Churches have encouraged ignorance, but the general tone of these books is chilling and one is in danger of forgetting that love is one of the good-natured arts. When one reads some of these often disingenuous and usually displeasingly illustrated books, one wishes that the public were given Penguin editions of, say, Clement Egerton's translation of *The Golden Lotus* or the Mardrus and Powys Mathers' translation of *The 1001 Nights*, which are far more instructive, and which, being literature, relate the experiences of sexual love with the rest of human experience. English literature since the ninteenth century has failed in its sexual descriptions because they have always been ecstatic, but rarely witty and never broadly humorous. We hardly go beyond the day-dream. The curse of our age has been the isolation of sex.

When he looks for the solution of the problem of the sale of pornographic literature, Mr. Craig finds himself, like most educated people, taking two attitudes. One seems to be that, as healthy sexual knowledge and customs become general, the problem solves itself. There will be no one to read that part of the literature which is evil, and is, in fact, tedious to a happy man or woman. I imagine he would agree with Havelock Ellis, who thought that some of the perverse literature—sadism and flagellation—was socially beneficial; people got rid of these proclivities in the imagination instead of satisfying them at the expense of society. I wonder if Ellis would say that to-day, when the sadistic best seller, with its accounts of torture, is having an unprosecuted vogue. Isn't it possible that these books will turn the reader's mind to hatred of "normal" sexual habits? Can society stand that? The vendor of filthy pictures and filthy books is relatively harmless, for his clientele is small and his books never live up to their titles and covers. Mr. Craig's second attitude is an attempt at compromise. He would make the law stick to its original intention and leave works meant for the educated adult alone. The law should confine itself to the protection of the young. That sounds sensible enough; but how you protect the young is difficult to see. Which adults are educated? Even when we argue that the evil and anti-social pornographic books are those which encourage hatred of sex, we are up against the case of *Ulysses*, which was imbued with that hatred of sex which seems to well up in society from time to time, especially when human nature is making one of its lopsided movements towards either religious or political power. The case for Mr. Craig is, of course, that one cannot trust magistrates or the police to discriminate. They will ban the best scientific works and allow the spurious ones. They will never notice the insidious. Obviously their powers ought to be strictly limited; if only because prosecution for sexual offences is used sooner or later for political ends. In the meantime, because of the fuss and muddle, there is no literature among English pornography. We have lost the art of writing about sex; we can only preach and poeticise in a rather arduous way. Even the candid literature of our day is mainly a literature of anxiety and hatred. There are no honest gallant tales. As for laughter, good-nature or curiosity, we have had very little of these in literature since the Middle Ages.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *Above all Liberties*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 7s. 6d.

THERE AND HERE

Hitler's Reich and Churchill's Britain. A Conversation between STEPHEN LAIRD and WALTER GRAEBNER. *Batsford*. 6s.

This conversation piece—of the sort that might develop on a long train journey—between the Berlin and London correspondents of *Time* is brilliant journalism. They compare notes aloud. Each tells what he knows and fires questions at the other, and the result is a sandwiched impression of two countries at war. Comparisons touch as many points as possible, large and small. Hitler and Churchill, new order and democracy, blitz and R.A.F. sweep, no-news and most-of-the-news, public services there as here, food, propaganda, the Hess Case, what they're saying, entertainment, stoical sacrifice, war strain, the future: not much is missed, behind the walls of drilling and killing, on either side; though Mr. Laird, during his six months in Berlin—from November, 1940, to June, 1941—found conditions more difficult to probe.

To take Mr. Laird's half of the picture first. The English reader, free to read this or any other book, must imagine that right taken away from him; must dispossess himself of freedom of mind, and assume, instead, suspicion of his neighbours, fear of the police, hope on the subsistence level. He will then be in a position to enter into the helot-life of the average German. Hitler has given him (in return for obedience) "security," and beyond that he looks for a little happiness. He has the war, for which, however, he blames neither Hitler nor the British. He reads without enthusiasm a blandly featureless press. He lives almost wholly on bread and potatoes, receives each month a small gritty cake of soap, smokes a very few cigarettes of a kind known as "sun-burned grass," grumbles over clothing, the air raids, and the fruits of victory. Once or twice a week he may go to the cinema, where the films are Nazi melodramas for twelve-year-olds, or on Sunday night to a café to get drunk. He can't travel; there is nowhere to go, no means of going. He can spend his day off in the park; can visit a church where the ritual, if not the pulpit opinion, remains; and when he has saved £1 he can buy a seat at a first-class concert. The shops are bare of almost everything except essentials; a "cheap sofa" will cost him a fabulous sum. His rent has been fixed, but so have wages, though he must work longer hours and pay heavier taxes. Striking is punishable by death. When he falls ill he will try to get into a Catholic hospital, already overcrowded, but the only place where a competent medical service survives.

Such is the civilian mould into which all classes are poured. Above these, better fed but shorter lived, are the soldiery. Above them again, the élite: Hitler's court, the party bosses and millionaires, the political generals, the intelligentsia of the Myth. It is a new and degenerate Sparta, the ant State in process of creation. Apart from suffering, how does it work? Provisionally and so far, Mr. Laird suggests, pretty well. The élite enjoy unbridled power and riches; the soldiers are healthy, better armoured and more ruthlessly deployed than any others in the world; the workers are dulled but busy. *But* Hitler has to win the war: with power-mania and blood-baths goes inefficiency: the Germans, though blinkered, have instincts that aren't Hitler's. Two passages from Mr. Laird's conversation are especially striking. In the first he describes a visit to a German cinema:

> They showed a captured American newsreel in Germany. The film showed the damage done to London—fires burning and so on. There wasn't a sound from the audience. And then it showed Churchill going to inspect the damage, and

the German announcer said: "You're to blame, Winston Churchill, for this." Again not a sound, and a German woman who was with us cried bitterly and said: "This is dreadful. Those poor British people."

Not a good audience of ants. And Mr. Laird had noticed that German soldiers now call the English soldier "Tommy." Then how far, he was asked, has the New Order imposed itself as an acceptable condition of life on the German people? His answer is succinct.

> Even now [he says], after eight years of the Nazi police State, hundreds of Germans are being shot by Himmler each year for participating in opposition to the regime. Millions of Germans are anti-Nazi in thought, if not in action. As for those Germans who are acquiescent, or just quiescent, remember that the Germans have gone through a lot more than Nazism: They've been through the world war; they had Versailles and then they had to fight for power and then they had an inflation and then they moved into a major depression, and then they had a fight for power in which Hitler won out and then they had the brutalities and the suppressions when the Nazis came to power, and then they had the years of preparation for war—tightening of their belts, and working hard—and now they've got another war against the world. Much of the German people is numb from all they've been through.
>
> Hitler never came legally to power, as you know. He had only about a third of the voters behind him in the last free German election, and the reason he had as many as he did was that there was a great feeling of insecurity in Germany and he promised to eliminate unemployment. When he came to power he really did eliminate unemployment by going into munitions manufacture and by building up huge armed forces.

The dilemma of the German people is now, he goes on to argue, that they want peace. Only two kinds of peace are possible: under Hitler or with Hitler defeated; and, encouraged by Goebbels and Lord Vansittart, they see in the second a fate blacker than Versailles. They prefer, therefore, the first. Hitler himself, according to Mr. Laird, has quite lost touch with popular feeling about the war.

Details from Mr. Laird's observation of life under the New Order: The *Volkswagon* or citizen's car, subscribed for but never delivered, has given way to the promise of a *Volkstraktor* for farmers; shortage of oil checked the Luftwaffe's attack on England; 2,500 aeroplanes and 1,200 tanks a month are given as probable current figures of production; the Nazis' chief want both at home and in occupied territory is rolling stock; R.A.F. reports were considered by neutral observers in Berlin to be "very inaccurate and very exaggerated"; a phoney town has been built up five miles' flying time this side of Berlin, for the R.A.F. to bomb successfully; taxation on the top income levels is lower than in England or America; Ley, Labour Front boss, owns a monopoly in contraceptives; the only art that has not fallen abysmally under Nordic influences has been music; Hitler believed that English property-holders would force a peace in September, 1940, that, when Russia was attacked, the Stalin regime would be overthrown. Under the New Order, we learn, England will be respected so long as she produces for the Führer's armies; and it is hoped (by the Führer) that the British Navy will eventually be persuaded to hand itself over to him intact.

Two facts should be remembered about this obviously shrewd and lively reporting. Mr. Laird left Germany in June, with the Russian campaign barely started and America six months away from war: the time-lag robs some of his pages of topicality. And the generalisations are based, like those of other journalists, on experience of Berlin and a very few places outside. One judges his reliability by the way in which he answers the questions put by his colleague, Mr. Graebner, and by the sort of questions he asks in return.

The companion picture of England I need not describe in detail, except to say that it is generally fair and accurate, with some sharp-edged truths for our especial benefit. For example, slums, unemployment, fancy rents, urban ugliness and racketeering are a few of the things we are still hopefully fighting for. Mr. Graebner isn't slow to spot them, to see the woolliness of the Atlantic Charter and public dissatisfaction with it. How far has our "social revolution" gone? Farther, perhaps, than we may think, with the 19s. 6d. income tax, the disappearance of the little man, the increase of Government control; but still it stops short of economic or political reality, and any change in people's minds has been negative. "Good-naturedly resigned"—Mr. Graebner's phrase—is horribly true of English attitudes. At the most we have given up certain things and certain ideas, without embracing others. Inherited feudalism still makes the British Army the least democratic army in the world—not excepting Hitler's.

Looking on that picture and this, one might reflect on the differences of living in a convict prison and, say, a reformatory school; with the possibility of graduating from the latter. The contrast is favourable to us, perhaps overwhelmingly so, but we aren't encouraged to be cockahoop, or to pretend that strait-jackets are the floweriest of waistcoats. One reason why *Hitler's Reich and Churchill's Britain* is so valuable is that, besides ringing the bell, it has been written in a truth-seeking mood. Such and such, the authors agree, are the facts, the chances. They do more than report; for two and two are put together. They stop short of propaganda, which is the art of making 2+2=5, or 6, or 10. While propaganda may be necessary in wartime, the future depends on our getting a ration of strict criticism as well. Mr. Laird and Mr. Graebner provide it.

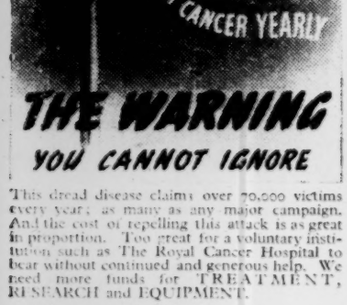
G. W. STONIER

GRAND STRATEGY

Grand Strategy. By H. A. SARGEAUNT and GEOFFREY WEST. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The term "grand strategy" is commonly applied to the conjoint military and political activities of a belligerent State, or, rather, those higher policies which are at once military and political and which transcend and determine the strategies of generals and admirals. The authors of this book have put the term to a wider use, extending its application so as to embrace the whole polity not only in war, but in the intervening periods of preparation for war. In their hands the study of grand strategy becomes the study of society as a whole (society regarded as a war-making machine), and a very interesting study it is, too: the enormous influence which military crises and the exigencies of defence exert upon every part of the State are brought to light, the social results of warfare, both good and bad, being clearly exposed. The drawback of this method of looking at history is that the opposing tendency, the determination of grand strategy itself by social change, is apt to be underrated or even forgotten. The authors are so charmed by the commodity of their historical vehicle that at times they put the cart before the horse.

The evolution of warfare from the time of the French Revolution to the present day, which occupies the greater part of this book, is presented as a continual, though not, it should be added, a regularly continuous process, of action upon and adjustment to the changing character and insatiable appetites of the modern nation. At each turn of history a new national strategy embodied in a new social system appears under the leadership of some enormous national hero. From each national solution arises another



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opposing and complementary system; the continuous development of industry supplies a varying factor which makes each new combination of the essential and permanent characteristics of strategy a repetition on a "higher" plane of what has gone before, adding additional terrors to the battlefield and a progressive approach to "totality" on the home front. "Rung by rung the anguished yet stimulated nations have climbed this ladder of war, bearing an ever-increasing burden." Nor is the process to be regarded as incidental to the growth and making of nations; it is, on the contrary, an inescapable part of the working of history.

Like all such condensations, this summary of the argument is unfair; nor can any restatement convey the vigorous and fecund expression of the original. Equally, one is obliged to leave unanswered many challenging and provocative *obiter dicta*. There are, however, statements which, because they seem to be based on that misunderstanding of the working of history to which we have already referred, are fundamental and cannot be passed over.

> Britain's huge demands [in the Peninsular campaigns], coupled with the expansion of the export trade in order to increase imports and also to attack French industry, led to a general adoption of the factory system.

This passage is torn from its context, to which the palpable mis-statement that the general adoption of the factory system was caused by Wellington's attritive war is not vitally relevant. But the tendency is noteworthy and recurs throughout, war being continually presented as the essential mainspring of human progress.

> Change is not sufficiently ingrained in men to operate automatically; there are too many internal forces refusing to shift save under the biting lash of life and death struggle. . . .

And again:

> . . . men so far have in their ignorance found it hard to achieve or even to recognise progress, save by the painfully acid test of war. . . .

But in point of fact the evidence of history is by no means convergent upon this point. The Industrial Revolution may have been accelerated by the Napoleonic Wars, but it certainly preceded them; it was the motor-car which produced the tank, not the tank the motor-car. As has already been said, the development of warfare is not a continuous process; indeed, it is, on the contrary, notoriously spasmodic, particularly in those countries whose natural wealth and good fortune has allowed a free development of capitalism and democracy. Here, as we know to our cost, the neglect of years must often be repaired in the course of months; where the commercial motive is lacking there is no national ardour capable of affording an equal incentive. Until very recently, at all events, one might say of a country such as the United States that there was no progress without profit.

Here, then, is a qualification to be borne in mind. Happily it is of more historical than actual importance, for in the present state of the world all economies must tend towards a total unity of purpose in the pursuit of victory. The final chapters, therefore, which deal with the present and future, and which are the most valuable in the book, are not greatly affected by any exaggeration of the social effect of war. These chapters cannot fairly be examined save at some length, and here, therefore, can only be praised without discussion.

Mr. Sargeaunt's forthcoming history of European grand strategy will be awaited with great interest. QUENTIN BELL

CELTIC DAYLIGHT

Vanished Waters. By ALASDAIR ALPIN MACGREGOR. *Methuen.* 12s. 6d.

Driftwood and Tangle. By MARGARET LEIGH. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

The fascination exercised by the Celt upon the Saxon would be a fitting study for international psychology. And if it is objected that no such science exists, then all I can say is that it ought to, for it is badly needed. It certainly would not want for case-histories. Englishmen, brought up in a culture which singularly lacks grace in social intercourse are apt to find the beautiful manners of other nations enchanting. The easy elegance of an Arab fellahin, of a Bosnian peasant, of a Highland crofter, all bred in old rural civilisations, are astonishing to people who are at a loss how to engage a stranger in a train in conversation. (Yet the corruption of the best is the worst: there is no vulgarity more crass than that of some urbanised Highlanders and Irishmen; and as for the Welsh, it is difficult to believe of sections of them that they have the same racial ancestry.) Again, there is verbal charm; song and story are the arts of the Celt; his Gaelic language has a lovely lilt, and is rich, supple and expressive. He uses English with a conscious and enjoying art, refreshing it in the ears of its own people, convention-damned to triteness and neglect of its beauties. The attraction goes deeper yet; I have wondered sometimes if it is stimulation. The quicker wits, the more logical and articulate mind, the wilder feelings, even the unbridled pride, temper and greed of the Celt, makes the blood of the English tingle and quicken its slow beat.

This accounts for those individuals, of plainly Sassenach origin, whom one meets alone and palely loitering in Irish and West Highland hotels. If men, they look yearningly at the kilt; if women, they wear garments of handwoven wool strangely unlike the equally hand-knitted jumpers in Bond Street shops, but probably quite as expensive. They intone the name of Deirdre, and mutter that of Naoise, of whose pronunciation they are not very certain. La Belle Dame sans Merci, no doubt a Bretonne, hath them in thrall.

The two books under review are wholesome correctives to this romanticism. Alasdair Alpin MacGregor, in a series of childhood memories, displays that flinty critical sense which so often, and so disconcertingly to the sentimentalist, accompanies fanatical loyalties in the Highlander. The tales are slight enough, but they recapture the very mind of childhood, and are interesting for their account of a gentle Highland family in Victoria's last days. The father is drawn with admiration untempered by mercy; a terrible fellow, retired from world travel as an army doctor to compose Gaelic poetry and discipline a young wife and a large family. In Wester Ross he arranged life on an antique pattern, with his three-year-old boy "seated beside him on the scented hillside above the bay, while he drilled me into the rhythm of "Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel". He taught his children that they were royal, being descended, like all true MacGregors, from Kenneth MacAlpine, but sent them to the village school, according to the admirable Scottish tradition; admirable, at least, when the dominie was a good master, as the author's was not. The colonel's vagaries wore his wife out, and at one period she departed to live in an hotel in Inverness. He staged a royal rage when he visited her with all the family:

> "You must be aware that you have not lived up to the ancient and honourable name of MacGregor. . . . And, by the way, where are those two volumes concerning my kinsman, General Sir Charles MacGregor, one of the Crown's most gallant and respected servants in India? You must have stolen them."

He then searches her bedroom and returns to

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> "Children," he says, "your mother has disgraced the tartan of an ancient and historic race." Thereupon he strode up to the fireplace, and crumbling up the plaid, threw it on the enormous fire. By that fire he stood as one on guard, poking the plaid farther and farther into the heart of the fire with his walking-stick, until every vestige of it was consumed.

Margaret Leigh, though English, has earned the right to describe the Highlands by dint of living and working there, and learning the language. Her message, if she has one, is that country is better than city ; farm work freer than factory routine, simplicity of living a thing to be striven for, as an escape from our vile and bloodthirsty environment. This alone would be scarcely worth the saying, but she is an exact and vivid portraitist of nature, and writes a stripped and effective style, so that her essays do give the relief of escape to the lonely coasts of Ireland and the Hebrides. I quote a sample :

> The loch lay wide and unruffled, guarded on the south by steep rocky escarpments, and on the west by pine woods in which a wandering breeze was softly moaning. Night had already invaded the mushy derelict pastures, reducing their hillocks and hollows to a uniform featureless grey. But the loch, like all calm waters, from a moss pool to the plains of ocean, had robbed the sky of its last light, and lay like a burnished shield without shadow or blemish. From its northern shore extended a long narrow spit planted with pines ; and the water behind it, screened from the west by those thick dark trees, lay black and still as polished ebony. Three swans were floating there ; and though in shadow, they shone with a luminous whiteness as if lit up from within.

FREDA WHITE

THE RED DUSTER AT WAR

The Red Duster at War. By WARREN ARMSTRONG. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

From my experience of the Merchant Service which has been fairly widespread among both deep water and coastal vessels, I can recommend *The Red Duster at War* as a most conclusive book. The author has boldly laid before the public detailed facts that require to be known about conditions in the Service. His vivid description of fo'c'sle life are alone enough to make the English reader shudder, and blush for his country, and particularly for the shipowners who knowingly and deliberately made the lives of their employees intolerable in order to increase dividends. He gives, for instance, a blistering description of ice-box-ships in so many of which the provedore arrangements are grossly inadequate and threaten the men with the deep-sea horror once known as the " Harness Cask."

Mr. Armstrong explains the urgent need of a Parliamentary Commission to deal with such matters as pay, and accommodation ashore and afloat for officers and men alike. He points out, however, that not a few M.P.s have a financial interest in maintaining the present bad conditions.

He shows that to a nation dependent upon sea-borne imports such huge ships as the *Queen Mary* are not assets : not only are they highly vulnerable to attack by aeroplane and submarine, but their deep draught prevents them using many of the cargo ports where they now are needed. He insists on the necessity of large fleets of medium tonnage vessels with good cargo space, good accommodation for the crew and a good turn of speed. The story of the slacking off of tonnage after 1918 and well into the present war, would be incredible if it were not true. As a result to-day some ships, or rather hulks that have virtually been dragged from the breakers' yards and put into commission are " ocean death-traps," requiring the attention of a modern Plimsoll. The interests of the country, in fact, as well as of the seamen, have been deliberately sacrificed for those of the shareholders.

Mr. Armstrong paints a shameful picture also of our merchantmen during war putting to sea almost unarmed : ships queuing up for guns, often out-of-date guns ; courses of gunnery instruction left too late. Such inexcusable shortsightedness can be concealed by no Admiralty statistics.

The book is a tribute as well as an indictment, a tribute to the endurance and gallantry of the men who bring us our necessities. The sufferings of torpedoed crews are made vivid to us no less than the inferno of Dunkirk. Reading the account of Dunkirk I felt certain that the author had taken an active part on those blood-soaked beaches. But the whole book is written with uncommon vigour and descriptive power. I should like those who complain to-day about their food to be forced to read this book and learn what human endurance is required to bring them that food. Mr. Armstrong has performed a great service, and the *Red Duster* should be dipped in salute to him.

C. W. BALCHIN

THE EUROPEAN MIND

Daylight : Volume One. *Hogarth Press.* 6s.

This new venture, sponsored by a group of English and Czech writers, promises to be a wartime successor to those periodicals of the last decade—notably *The Criterion* and *The European Review*—which aimed to represent the European mind. It must of necessity trespass to some extent on the territory of *New Writing*, which it resembles moreover in format and in its English element ; but if sufficient distinction can be maintained between the two, *Daylight* might do much to preserve continuity in our relations with European culture. We have lost the advantage of intimacy with the native home-detail of other people—their domestic ambience, their journalism, their theatre and so forth—but we have the compensation of a cross-section of Europe in our midst. It is torn from its context, it is in some measure distorted by circumstance, but it offers a familiar proximity, a neighbourliness, which must make collaboration easier. The memory of what we owe to the special endowments of refugees and expatriates in the past should provide the editors of *Daylight* with an expectant audience.

Their outline of policy puts forward two aims : first, to strengthen political understanding between the Allies by giving it a cultural background, and secondly, to give practical effect to the underlying unity of European thought and art. The contents of the present volume separate into three main methods of approach. Most important, of course, are the translations of poems and stories, combined with original English work. In addition to these there is a number of critical surveys of particular subjects, including an illustrated group of articles on the theatre. Lastly, there is a necessary but not very happy attempt to review the background of politico-cultural ideas, with special reference to the relations between the arts and the State.

The poems and stories are good, though Nezval looks to be the kind of poet who loses most when taken out of his own language. English renders his imagery bizarre and capricious to a pointless degree. Of the other translations the poems of George Seferis and Egon Hostovsky's story are outstanding ; less of a novelty but equally accomplished is a further group of Norman Cameron's translations from Rimbaud. These struck me as the best three things in the book. Egon Hostovsky already has several books to his credit. If they are written with the brilliance and power of this story of his in *Daylight* it is high time some English publisher clapped his hat on and went out in a hurry to do a deal. I reckon Hostovsky has enough talent to outshine four-fifths of the novels that come to me for review—and that's putting it mildly.

The critical surveys are informative, well documented and suggestive, but they incline to wear the unduly solemn face of a university thesis. Karel Brusak summarises experimental tendencies in theatrical architecture and dramatic theory, Mosco Carner does a like service for music, Hsiao Ch'ien comments on European influences on Chinese drama, and the Earl of Longford reviews the Irish theatre. In the sphere of general theory Rex Warner indicates that a critique of Fascism might amount to more than a throwing up of the hands in horror, and Stephen Spender walks bloody but unbowed under a banner of liberal-democratic slogans. It is a marvel to me that a writer of Mr. Spender's undoubted calibre can be at times so flat-footed and hazy ; probably one word in every three of his present essay belongs to semantic pathology.

Finally, a word of tribute to V. S. Pritchett, whose note on that delectable Czech classic, *The Good Soldier Schweik*, reinforces my belief that Mr. Pritchett's superiors are either dead or dumb. The editors of *Daylight* modestly reproach themselves with the scarcely avoidable predominance of English and Czech writers, but no doubt future issues will attract more representatives of other nations. Meanwhile, here is a promising start.

DESMOND HAWKINS

Words and Days. A Table Book of Prose and Verse, compiled by BOWYER NICHOLS. *Oxford.* 5s.

There can never be too many anthologies : most people love them, and indeed the better selections—and they are, after all, many—form the best imaginable frames for the minds pictured in the arts of living. Apart from the obvious advantage of portability and the pleasing sense they give of taking all the trouble for one, anthologies have—or should have—the quality of providing an implicit system of criticism by means of simple juxtaposition. This is the peculiar value of the late Bowyer Nichols's discreet, austere and ironic selection of prose and verse, first published in 1895 and now reissued. Each day in the year is allotted a page, and each page contains, first, some lines by Shakespeare, then a paragraph of prose, and lastly, another poem or a piece of one. The intention is to throw simultaneous light from three different dimensions, as it were, on to one subject—frequently an association with the feast or saint whose day it is. But Nichols, who took advantage of leisure to cultivate most efficiently what used to be known as the things of the mind, had a quiet but slightly malicious humour, and if you do not look sharp, some of his aptest allusions will escape you. On August 15th, for instance, you may not seize the point of the triple allusion to woman—one from *All's Well*, the second by George Eliot, the third by Coventry Patmore—until you remember that this is the Feast of the Assumption ; when all becomes clear and the anthologist's peculiar and most unorthodox view of the Virgin Mary falls into place. This anthology expresses, for those who care to read between the lines, a definite view of life, and its author's admirable taste not only rescues forgotten beauties from authors like Ruskin (see page 129) but contrives to make of his selection, which disdains all parade of esoteric reading, something both wise and pretty—not, you will admit, an easy combination to achieve. Readers are urged not to be put off by the " fragrant " preciosity of Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith's introduction.

British Unemployment Programs, 1920-1938. By EVELINE M. BURNS. *Committee on Social Security, Washington.*

This book, written for the Committee on Social Security, should have many readers in this country as well as in America. Dr. Burns, now a lecturer in Economics at Columbia University, is an Englishwoman who, before she went to the U.S.A., was on the staff of the London School of Economics and also spent some time as an official of the Ministry of Labour. The present book is the fruit of a long and close study of social affairs, reinforced by visits of investigation in Britain in 1933 and 1937. It is a clear, critical and well-documented account of the methods adopted by a succession of British Governments from 1920 onwards to deal with an old problem that has taken a new and a monstrous form. It is concerned mainly with the expansion and vicissitudes of the Unemployment Insurance scheme and the

establishment of the Unemployment Assistance Board, and, more slightly, with the positive measures taken for combating mass-unemployment, particularly in the Special Areas. The small space Dr. Burns gives to these positive measures is not her fault, but ours. For she is right in saying that "the British approach to the more difficult social and psychological problems created by the fact of long continued unemployment has been very limited and often half-hearted." The war has, of course, put unemployment on the back shelf. When it comes out again, new methods will inevitably be called for, and it is to be hoped that both in Britain and in America the lesson of our past mistakes will be taken to heart. The fundamental mistake has been, in Dr. Burns's words, "the almost exclusive concentration on maintenance."

Week-end Competitions

No. 628

Set by Sigmund Pike

Mr. Robert Helpmann has recently delighted audiences with a ballet taken from Milton's *Comus*, and is said to be at work on a *Hamlet*. Competitors are invited to submit suggestions of theirs for a new ballet taken from literary sources. A synopsis, or description of some sort, in not more than 200 words should be given. Competitors may be serious or not, as they please.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, February 23.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 625

Set by Fred Oyster

We offer the usual prizes for the best ballad (not exceeding 20 lines) of Famous Murderers.

Report by Fred Oyster

Many competitors have debarred themselves this week from winning a prize. I asked for a "ballad of famous murderers"—a composite celebration—and, regretfully in some cases, I have had to rule out poems that sing one murderer and his crime. Crippen was something of a favourite. Every phase of that gentle and forbidding career, from the early days in a suburban row to the climax in mid-ocean, found expression in biographical verse.

> In Hilldrop Crescent lived a man
> By no means unromantic,

began K. W. Simpson. Some sympathy, indeed, was shown by most of these entries, and D. D. R.'s poem, taking the final scene on board the *Montrose*, was less a ballad than a dramatic lyric.

> The breeze blew free along the deck
> Of the mid-Atlantic liner,
> Lifting the curls in the nape of the neck
> Of the boyish woman in the rough tweed-fleck
> And cheering her admirer.

They watch together the swirling wake, and turn towards America; but then comes the intrusion by Marconi.

Other single biographies or obituaries were provided for Rouse, Brutus, Cain and Tess of the D'Urbervilles. "Simkin's" verses are charmingly in key.

> There lived a man in London town,
> A quiet man, not one to boast,
> Though he was handier than some,
> And nimbler on his feet than most.
>
> He died. And when his limbs were cooled
> A woman came to dress the dead.
> She smoothed his cheeks and bound his jaw,
> But not an angry word she said.
>
> The undertaker coffined him,
> The registrar wrote him in his book,
> And through the streets they carried him,
> But no one gave a second look.
>
> They buried him in open day,
> They let no eating quicklime fall.
> Everything passed off very quietly
> At Jack the Ripper's funeral.

But, alas, if competition terms are to mean anything, "Simkin" must go without the prize.

Burke and Hare perhaps are admitted under those terms, since they are unquestionably "famous murderers," but the best of the Burke-and-Hares (by G. Percy and Barbara Duncan Harris) just falls short, I think, of the best of the ballads telling over a dozen famous names. I suggest the first prize be given to OHE for a rich catalogue, and the second to G. de Vavasour for his sad criminals out of fiction.

FIRST PRIZE

> Tell me where, and what they do,
> Those who killed by force or art,
> WILLIAMS who with mallet slew,
> THURTELL in his smart gig-cart?
> PEACE who from this world did part
> Like a summer evening's breeze,
> CREAM who poisoned many a tart,
> Tell me, Kali, where are these?
>
> SWEENY TODD and CONSTANCE KENT,
> JACK THE RIPPER, king of all,
> G. J. SMITH on marriage bent,
> With bath water as a pall?
> MISTRESS MANNING, silk besprent,
> Who our Queen did so displease,
> CRIPPEN, full of best intent,
> Tell me, Kali, where are these?
>
> BENNETT with his bootlace ties,
> FOWLER who with MILSOM founded
> That suburban Paradise
> Which once northern London bounded?
> Hats that one no longer buys,
> MULLER-cut-downs, if you please,
> Fashion comes and fashion dies,
> Tell me, Kali, where are these?
>
> SEDDON, ARMSTRONG, or LEFROY
> With Gold's watch in boot concealed,
> MAHON whose peculiar joy,
> In dissection was revealed?
> BROWN-and-KENNEDY's alloy
> Cause of P. C. G.'s decease,
> MISTRESS THOMPSON and her Boy,
> Tell me, Kali, where are these?

(OHE)

SECOND PRIZE

> O where are you from, with fearful looks?
> Why come you to affright us?
> *O we are all murderers out of books;*
> *We have come to accuse our writers.*
>
> Then I saw sad Tess and stern Markheim,
> And anguished, dark Othello;
> The marble faun, deep stained in crime,
> Sweet, evil Donatello.
>
> Here Jonas Chuzzlewit appeared,
> Still glancing past his shoulder.
> Both Rudge and Sykes knew what he feared,
> But they were no whit bolder.
>
> Porphyria's lover in his hand
> Held a gold strand of hair.
> Denmark's false king, and Ferdinand,
> Bright Malfi's slayer, were there.
>
> Their voices thin rose like a flood
> That overflows the river.
> *Why have you dipped our hands in blood,*
> *And doomed us all for ever?*

(G. DE VAVASOUR)

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